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THE REALM OF ENDS  
OR  
PLURALISM AND THEISM



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THE REALM OF ENDS  
OR  
PLURALISM AND THEISM

THE GIFFORD LECTURES  
DELIVERED IN THE UNIVERSITY OF ST ANDREWS  
IN THE YEARS 1907-10

BY

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All tended to mankind,  
And man produced, all has its end thus far :  
But in completed man begins anew  
A tendency to God

BROWNING.

Aber die erkannten thatsächlichen Verhältnisse können allein unsere  
Gedanken nach diesem Mittelpunkte der Welt wenigstens convergiren  
machen.

LOTZE.

## PREFACE

THESE lectures are intended to serve as a sequel to the course delivered in the University of Aberdeen some ten years previously. If at that time I had foreseen that I should presently be favoured with the opportunity to lecture on the *Realm of Ends or Pluralism and Theism* I might well have entitled the earlier lectures the *Realm of Nature or Naturalism and Agnosticism*. There my endeavour was to establish the priority of the idealistic, or—as it seems clearer to say—the spiritualistic standpoint; and here I have tried to ascertain what we can know, or reasonably believe, concerning the constitution of the world, *interpreted throughout and strictly in terms of Mind*.

At the outset, this world immediately confronts us not as one Mind, nor even as the manifestation of one, but as an objective whole in which we discern many minds in mutual interaction. It is from this pluralistic standpoint that our experience has in fact developed, and it is here that we acquire the ideas that eventually lead us beyond it. For pluralism, though empirically warranted, we find defective and unsatisfactory: but

the theism to which it points is only an ideal—an ideal however that, as both theoretically and practically rational, may claim our faith though it transcend our knowledge. Such is a meagre outline of the present lectures. The summary contained in the last of them may take the place of further prefatory detail.

The two lectures on Hegel (*Lectures VII and VIII*) are, it must be confessed, largely a digression. It was my intention to treat of Kant's philosophy in like manner—in both cases in order to substantiate the contention that anyhow, avowedly or not, pluralism is the starting point of speculation. But on second thoughts I felt that perhaps I had already done too much.

In *Lectures XIX, XX* I have embodied portions of a paper, entitled *Faith and Science*, read before the Synthetic Society in 1902. This has already appeared in a volume of that Society's papers privately reprinted by the Rt Hon. A. J. Balfour in 1909.

The preparation and delivery of these lectures were frequently interrupted by an illness that began soon after my appointment and continued till its close. I desire to take this occasion to thank the Senatus of the University of St Andrews for their extreme patience and forbearance then and since; and I cannot but rejoice that now at last these lectures, all defective though they be, are through this indulgence out of my hands.

I have still to express my obligations to generous friends: first, and especially, to Professor J. S. Mackenzie of Cardiff both for his long and careful criticisms and for the arduous work which he kindly undertook of reading through all the proofs; again to Professor G. F. Stout of St Andrews for many valuable and astute comments; and finally to my colleague, Professor W. R. Sorley, not only for his literary help but for his continuous encouragement throughout my labours.

JAMES WARD.

TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

*September, 1911.*

P. S. A second edition of this book being called for within a year, it has only been possible for me to correct sundry misprints, which various friends have kindly pointed out, and to add at the end of the volume some Replies to Criticisms.

J. W.

*July, 1912.*



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# PART I.

## PLURALISM.

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### LECTURE I.

#### INTRODUCTORY.

Mr Bradley concludes his metaphysical essay entitled *Appearance and Reality* with the admission that science is a poor thing if measured by the wealth of the real universe: he finds that "in the end Reality is inscrutable," and is confirmed in "the irresistible impression that all is beyond us." Everyone must acknowledge this to be a more honest conclusion than the pretended demonstrations of many philosophers. Nobody now-a-days—save here and there a man of science off his beat, like Haeckel for example—has the hardihood to rush into print with a final explanation of the Universe. Still without perpetrating this folly can we not attempt to advance, to get more insight than at present we have? Surely this is possible, for though ignorance be inevitable, no specific errors are necessary.

But we must have some method: in particular we must be clear where we start from. It is a favourite phrase now widely current that the universe has many *aspects*, and such a conception has the merit of making



us vividly realise a source of error too often overlooked in the past—I mean confusion of standpoints. Precise orientation of these various aspects of the world is one of the first duties of philosophy, and the ascertaining of the supreme and ultimate standpoint is perhaps its chief concern. Now of these various aspects the two most sharply contrasted are those which lead us to speak of the world of mechanism and the world of morals, the subject-matter of the natural sciences on the one hand, and that of the moral sciences including history on the other. The one Kant was wont to call the Realm of Nature, the other the Realm of Ends; assigning to the former as its characteristic mark the notion of ‘empirical necessity,’ to the latter that of ‘practical freedom.’

It would be superfluous to spend time in picturing out this contrast in detail<sup>1</sup>: we have only to think of comparing some classical work of science—say Newton’s *Principia*—with one of history—as, for example, his contemporary Clarendon’s *Great Rebellion*—to realise impressively the complete diversity of the two realms. Regarding the scientific ideal of Nature as a rounded whole, we may safely say that the world of science and the world of history have little or nothing in common: their terminology, their categories, their problems are wholly different; and so too are the philosophical questions to which they severally and immediately give rise. The one never reaches the individual and concrete, the other never leaves them; for the one spontaneity and initiative are impossible, for the other

<sup>1</sup> Cf. my article: ‘Mechanism and Morals,’ *Hibbert Jn.*, Vol. iv. 1905, pp. 79 ff.

inertia and rigorous concatenation; to the one the notions of end and value are fruitless, nay meaningless, for the other they are of paramount importance. And yet the two cannot be separated, for Nature not only provides the scenery and properties of history but the actors themselves seem to have sprung from its soil, to owe their position largely to its cooperation, and to come into touch with each other solely through its means. After all, these so-called realms are but 'aspects' of one world; and it is precisely this fact that makes their seeming contrariety and incompatibility a problem for philosophy: where and how are we to find the final unification or mediation of the two? It will be one step towards a solution if we can determine which aspect is the more fundamental. It hardly needs to be said that since the dawn of speculation the claims of both aspects have had, as indeed they still have, their advocates. Those who assign the priority to Nature we call Naturalists: those who contend for the priority of free agents we may call Spiritualists. In a previous course of Gifford Lectures<sup>1</sup>, which I had the honour to deliver in Aberdeen ten years ago, I endeavoured to show the superiority of the spiritualistic position. The main lines of the argument can be very briefly indicated and I trust it will seem to you fitting that I should recapitulate them by way of introduction to the further inquiry into the nature of the spiritualistic realm and to the discussion of some of its problems, which I propose in the present course to attempt.

Reviewing the progress of the natural sciences since the times of Galileo and Descartes we may note

<sup>1</sup> *Naturalism and Agnosticism*, 3rd ed., 1906.

two characteristics. First, in so far as the qualitative variety and the complexity of concrete things are considered, we find several distinct sciences each with its own special concepts and methods, though all are more or less inductive and experimental. But all qualities and complexities whatever that natural objects present, and all the changes that they undergo, appear to involve quantitative constants and configurations admitting of more or less precise determination and measurement. As soon indeed as the movements of sensible bodies were found to admit of exact description by the science of mechanics the hypothesis at once presented itself that, as Newton expressed it, "the other phenomena of nature might be deduced from mechanical principles." And, as we all know, the hypothesis has been amply justified, though not indeed absolutely verified in every detail; mechanical explanation has therefore long been accepted as the *ne plus ultra* of what a scientific explanation can be. So much is this the case indeed that even the intractable problem of life is still generally regarded as only an outstanding difficulty and not as a veritable exception to the universality of mechanical laws.

We come now to the second characteristic. For long this mechanical theory was held to furnish us with the knowledge of the empirical reality which our sensible experience was supposed only obscurely to symbolise: it bore, in fact, the name of Natural Philosophy. But as its purely formal character became more apparent, and mathematical equations enabled it to dispense with the real categories of substance and cause, physicists themselves were the first to perceive

and to proclaim that this mechanical theory was after all but an abstract and ideal scheme—a pure science, which can only be actually ‘applied,’ as we say, with the help of the calculus of probabilities. And what diversity and irregularity the seeming simplicity and uniformity of large numbers may cover human statistics sufficiently show. In place then of the concrete world of sense symbolising this abstract scheme, it has now become clear that it is the abstract scheme itself which symbolises the concrete world from which it set out. It also indeed reveals the law and order that there prevail; but what the concrete world really is and what is the source of the law and order that it manifests are questions still wholly on our hands. But to call such descriptive scheme pure or rational science is to emphasize its source in mind; and when this intelligible scheme of our devising, with which the scientific inquirer greets Nature, is confirmed by Nature’s response, are we not justified in concluding that Nature is intelligent or that there is intelligence behind it?

When however the physical realists—those I mean who regard the mechanical theory not as an abstract summary of Nature’s routine but as presenting fully-orbed reality—when these realists are called upon to explain the relation of this mechanism to mind they become involved in hopeless inconsistencies. The mechanism is by definition an absolutely closed system, determinate in all its movements down to the minutest detail. Not merely does it brook no interference, but interference is strictly speaking inconceivable: the semblance of such could only mean the presence of

further mechanism hitherto concealed. Mind then is to be interpreted as an impotent and shadowy concomitant of brain, which is itself but a part of this mechanism inextricably linked in with the rest: we are conscious to be sure, but only conscious automata. This would seem to be the one possible conclusion from the naturalistic premises, if any conclusion were possible at all. But it also becomes a complete refutation of them the moment we raise an obvious question which Naturalism, owing to its absorption in the material aspect, has entirely overlooked: the question, I mean, How from the standpoint of consciousness is any knowledge of this independent mechanical system to be accounted for? Or, what comes to the same thing, how from the naturalistic standpoint can it be known that consciousness is concomitant with certain mechanical motions? Agreeably to its contention for the priority of its own standpoint, Naturalism terms the contents of its world phenomenal, and those of consciousness merely epiphenomenal. But now the tangible, visible, sonorous world, the world of external perception—from which the naturalist starts and to which in all his observations and experiments he appeals to verify the applicability of his theory—this world belongs entirely to the epiphenomenal series. So too does every concept in his theory as such; so that his appeal to experience to validate it is but an admission of its connexion with the perceptual, the so-called epiphenomenal. In short, awaken the naturalist from his mathematical ecstasy and the ‘epi’ at once drops away from our phenomena, while his phenomena—since he regards them as independent existences—turn out not to be phenomena

at ali. On the other hand, if we leave him where we found him, oblivious of the essential implications of experience, and contemplating *per impossibile* a closed system of mass-points in motion, then assuredly the notion that these have dependent, epiphenomenal, concomitants or 'collateral products' will never dawn upon him, or even admit of statement without contradiction. But a workable interpretation of experience compels us not only to reject this distinction of material phenomena and mental epiphenomena, but to reject also the tacit assumption that our percepts are merely subjective modifications. This whole distinction of phenomenon and epiphenomenon is but the old story of the Cartesian dualism over again. But after puzzling the world for nearly three centuries, it seems—at least as a philosophical tenet—in a fair way to disappear. Make two mutually exclusive halves out of the one concrete world: in the one you will find only your own so-called subjective states and have to become a solipsist; in the other the organisms you would find there you could call only automata at the best.

This brings us to another inconsistency in which Naturalism is involved; for, even if conscious, the automata as part of the continuous mechanism are, as already said, powerless to withstand or to control it: consciousness is only comparable to a shadow that incidentally in some mysterious way accompanies their working. To be sure we *seem* active, ever striving for ends, and the historical world would become meaningless if we were not. We do not infer this activity: it is *prima facie* an ultimate and constitutive fact of our daily experience and of its historical development.

None the less we are asked to believe that it is false, because otherwise the mechanical theory cannot be upheld. Granting then for the moment that our sense of activity is illusory, we have at least in turn the right to ask how the illusion can have arisen. Pure mechanical science recognises neither activity nor passivity, but only mass that is inert and motions that are reversible. But inertia is a negative term and becomes meaningless if we have no experience of activity. Such activity, however, as the historical world implies could not be found in the physical world unless that showed signs of being intelligently directed: but then such evidence could only be appreciated by beings who were themselves active. Moreover that evidence would be fatal to the mechanical theory itself—for a mechanism admitting of direction could not be a closed system—and so with the fall of the theory would fall also the objections to our common-sense conviction that were based upon it.

x All this however is negative argument; but positive arguments are not wanting. For instance, we say that 'knowledge is power,' and so 'to be forewarned is to be forearmed.' In proof we can point to instances innumerable in which the very knowledge of what in 'the natural course of things' will inevitably happen is the sure means of falsifying such a forecast. To take the very simplest illustration: lifeless masses do not get out of one another's way as masses under living guidance almost invariably do. Were it otherwise, the actual course of things would be vastly more calculable but would cease altogether to be intelligible. Solely because, though inviolable, what we significantly call the

'laws' of Nature can yet be turned to account, do they deserve the name of laws; and what limits our power is not their inflexibility but our own ignorance. Or again, compare living organisms and their processes, on the one hand, with inanimate objects and the changes that they undergo, on the other. We note at once an ever-increasing complexity as we rise in the scale of life, from the *amoeba* say to ourselves; and also in our artificial products as we rise in the scale of civilisation, say from the African kraal to the European city. The steady downward trend, the katabolic, levelling tendencies attributed to unchecked mechanism we find not merely suspended but reversed wherever there is life and mind. The notions of form, adaptation and control here force themselves upon our notice in contrast to matter and its blind, purposeless collisions. Undeterred by this amazing contrast, however, those who uphold the theory that Nature is really a closed mechanism must, and do, refuse to draw any line: living and lifeless, artificial and natural, are distinctions of no account from the point of view of the mechanical whole: life and mind are the concomitants of certain of its workings but the determinants of none. Still the prevision just now referred to and this sharp contrast are there, and have to be accounted for *somehow* to allow that they exactly tally with the presence of life and mind and advance continuously as these advance is but to state the problem, not to solve it. To be content with this is as veritable a specimen of what Germans call 'beer philosophy' as the profound remark that great rivers run through populous towns.

In the first place a series of coincidences so vast



cannot be casual and disconnected; and yet if the mechanism on the one side is a closed system, the living experience on the other cannot be even its 'collateral product,' as we have already seen. The hopeless *impasse* of dualism again confronts our naturalist, and he is fain to appeal to metaphysics; but the appeal he trusts is harmless, since he only asks for an *Unknowable* Reality to unite his mechanical phenomena with the psychical epiphenomena that run parallel with them. It is needless to enlarge on the absurdity of such metaphysics: that has been effectively exposed more than once already<sup>1</sup>. It is enough to note that all this agnostic monism comes to is the admission that there *is* a connexion and the confession—perhaps I should rather say, the contention—that this connexion is inexplicable. But what precisely is this connexion as a fact, and why is it inexplicable? We must turn to experience for an answer. There we find not indeed a dualism of material phenomena and mental phenomena, but a duality of object presented and subject affected, of subject striving and object attained: an interaction that is only inexplicable because for every finite experience it is ultimate—is its basal fact.

With this fact of the duality in unity of experience before us we are at the historical standpoint, the standpoint of the concrete and individual. Tracing the gradual development of experience we can see how the distinction between the real and the phenomenal arose, how with the advance of intersubjective intercourse and the growth of language the so-called trans-subjective objects, objects that, so to say, were common property,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Bradley, *Appearance and Reality*, pp. 127 ff.

ceased to be regarded as property—or relative to experiencing subjects—at all, while the objects of immediate experience were regarded as the *peculium* of the individual and so as not objects at all: in other words, we can see how the psychology of dualism came to shut itself *in* and the physics of dualism to shut itself *out*, by sundering the one world of experience into two halves, an internal and an external, both abstractions and so both devoid of reality. In particular such epistemological reflexion at once discloses the abstract character of the entire mechanical scheme, to which I have already referred.

Again, the light which experience on its practical side throws on the whole process and progress of knowledge is of fundamental importance. We are not simply cognitive beings: moreover, knowledge does not evolve itself, as it were by some purely immanent process, while we merely look on. Even if it may be so unfolded when acquired, its acquisition is only secured piecemeal, by arduous effort, and many misadventures. All this implies motives, implies ends to be attained: we seek knowledge primarily because it proves an aid to more and fuller life. Apart from this its quest would be unintelligible: this brings it within the scope of the realm of ends. Finally, if we consider the main structure of knowledge, we find that its fundamental principles of unity, causality and regularity are derived from this standpoint: in other words, the main structure of our concept of Nature is entirely anthropomorphic. ✓The unity of Nature is the ideal counterpart of the actual unity of each individual experience, where synthesis ever precedes analysis, and things are

only distinguished relatively to each other so long as they are apperceived together by the one subject. The category of causality we owe to the interaction of active subjects with their environment and especially with each other, and we attribute it analogically to what we then call the interaction of natural agents. Then as to the regularity of Nature or the universal reign of law, this never has been, and never can be, empirically established, nor does its denial involve any contradiction: that is to say, it is neither demonstrable nor axiomatic. It is a postulate that has its root in our primitive credulity. Were this *anticipatio mentis* never confirmed, knowledge would be impossible; but confirmed as it is continually in our earliest experience we thus advance to an *interpretatio naturae* as an orderly and intelligible system, a cosmos that evinces directly or indirectly the all-pervading presence of mind.

To sum up in words that I have lately used elsewhere:—"We are active beings and somehow control the movements of the bodies we are said to animate. No facts are more immediately certain than these, and there is nothing in our actual experience that conflicts with them. From these facts we advance to the abstract concepts on the strength of which Naturalism, by a grievous misapprehension of its own standpoint, attempts to question them. Stationed at the very outskirts of the knowable and intent only on the quantitative aspects of things—like those fabulous beings of geometrical romance, the inhabitants of Flatland—it finds impassable barriers which have no existence in the fuller dimensions of concrete experience. But we, orientating from this more central

position, may retort upon Naturalism with the words of Goethe,

Das Unzulängliche  
Hier wird's Ereigniss;  
Das Unbeschreibliche  
Hier wird's gethan.

Having satisfied ourselves, then, that mechanism is not the secret of the universe; that, if it is to have any meaning, it must subserve some end; and finding generally that increased knowledge of Nature's laws means increased control of Nature's processes, we accept the facts of experience in which subject and object interact, rather than the conclusions of dualism, that mind and matter are for us two alien worlds and all knowledge of Nature an inexplicable mystery<sup>1</sup>—we accept the spiritualistic standpoint and its Realm of Ends as the more fundamental.

I have called this position spiritualistic monism to distinguish it from materialistic monism, which we may disregard as obsolete, and from neutral or agnostic monism, which we may fairly treat as an inept and ineffectual attempt to get round the deadlock of dualism. But if this position be indeed the more fundamental, it ought to be possible, it may be urged, to see directly from this standpoint how the appearance of mechanism arises, or at least to make some progress towards accounting for it in terms of life and mind. Unquestionably it ought: and in fact, as we shall presently see, attempts have been specially numerous of late to meet this demand in a more or less scientific

<sup>1</sup> *Philosophical Orientation and Scientific Standpoints*, Berkeley, California, 1904.

fashion. Meanwhile we may remind those who demand of us an explanation of the appearance of mechanism, that, if the term be strictly taken, there need for spiritualism be no such appearance at all. The more completely we can interpret the world as a realm of ends the more completely the tables are turned upon naturalism. As this contends, in the words of Huxley, "for the gradual banishment from all regions of human thought of what we call spirit and spontaneity<sup>1</sup>," so that, for the gradual banishment of what we call inert stuff and directionless energy.

To see how the case stands let us recall the contrast between science and history just now referred to. The first effect of this contrast was the extravagant commonplace that history as unscientific had no interest for the philosopher. The final result may be the other extreme, that science as general and abstract has no interest for the philosopher; since he is concerned only with reality, and that is concrete and individual out and out. At any rate the thought of the last century made a very decided advance in this direction: in the course of it what were formerly called the descriptive or natural history sciences culminated in the philosophy of evolution, while abstract physics is lapsing, as we have seen, from its old supremacy as the mechanical philosophy to the rank of a merely descriptive scheme<sup>2</sup>. As compared with the nineteenth century the eighteenth—though it produced great historians—was a century devoid of historic sense. Its speculations

<sup>1</sup> *Collected Essays*, Eversley edn, Vol. I. p. 154.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Boltzmann, quoted in *Naturalism and Agnosticism*, Vol. I. p. 166.

concerning the origin of society, of language, of religion, show this. And, as the most recent historian of scientific thought has pointed out, the work of Laplace shows this too. Both his *Mécanique céleste*, "dealing with the general laws of motion and of 'lifeless masses,'" and his *Théorie de la Probabilité*, "dealing with the arithmetical properties of large numbers of units, leave out of consideration that hidden and mysterious phenomenon [fact] to which alone is attached...all that commands interest in the created world—the 'existence of individuality'". And yet it was in the latter of these works that Laplace, brushing aside freewill as a palpable illusion, proclaimed the implicit omniscience of the mechanical theory in a passage that I took for the text of my former lectures<sup>2</sup>. In like manner the belief in fixed and immutable species prevented Laplace's great contemporary, Cuvier, from appreciating the genetic view of nature, where the supreme importance of the individual first appears as—to quote an expression of Hegel's—"involving the species and genus in itself," where variation and heredity become the central problems of biology and where the classifications of system-makers cease to be of value save as a preliminary clue. I have mentioned Hegel, and—whatever may be thought of other sides of his philosophy—its value in this connexion can hardly be over-

<sup>1</sup> J. T. Merz, *A History of European Thought in the Nineteenth Century*, Vol. I. 1896, p. 124.

<sup>2</sup> It was reserved for Clerk Maxwell to point out clearly the inevitable limitation of the Laplacean data. Cf. his *Life* by Campbell and Garnett as quoted by Merz, *op. cit.* Vol. II. 1902, p. 559.

estimated. "If the historical literature of our time," said Zeller, "no longer contents itself with eruditely unravelling or critically sifting traditions, piecing together and pragmatically elucidating particular facts, but seeks first and foremost to understand the fundamental continuity of events, to comprehend broadly the development of history and the spiritual principles that control it, this advance is due not least to the influences that Hegel's *Philosophy of History* has exercised<sup>1</sup>." Now for Hegel human history meant struggle for rational freedom, as for Darwin natural history meant struggle for existence: both are teleological concepts, both imply individual agents and unique events, for both the physical world is provisionally a means to ends. The historical method, then, we may say, is altogether the product of the nineteenth century and there we find it claiming "to have invaded and transformed all departments of thought." "A belief in this method," said Sidgwick in the course of a polemic against it, "is the most widely and strongly entertained philosophical conviction at the present day<sup>2</sup>."

Even the negative side of this transformation, the waning of scientific realism, is largely due to the growing conviction of the central importance of the concrete and historical. It is not merely the truth that laws imply agents, nor again the truth that scientific laws are only abstract formulae—what here becomes apparent is that scientific generalisations are an economic device necessitated by our limitations.

<sup>1</sup> *Geschichte der deutschen Philosophie*, p. 824.

<sup>2</sup> 'The Historical Method,' *Mind*, 1886, p. 203.

But it is to Ernest Mach, a physicist who has turned philosopher, that we owe the most impressive presentation of this truth. "In reality," he says, "the law always contains less than the fact itself, because it does not reproduce the fact as a whole, but only that aspect of it which is important to us, the rest being either intentionally or from necessity omitted<sup>1</sup>." If we were capable of that intellectual intuition of which some philosophers have dreamt, there would be no enforced omissions, no intractable residuum, no sundering of 'that' and 'what' in our knowledge; history would not be left outside science, but rather science be taken up into history. We should not start with the abstract and general, unable to reach the concrete and individual, but being fully acquainted with every individual we should be relieved of the incommensurability of fact and law. Omniscience of this sort would surely bring us nearer to reality than the omniscience of Laplace's imaginary spirit with its completed world-formula. Order there would needs be in such a world, if it is to be a world at all. But

<sup>1</sup> Mach, 'The Economical Nature of Physics,' *Popular Scientific Lectures*, p. 193. This necessary limitation of discursive thought has led to two distinct but more or less complementary attitudes towards concrete reality. Elated by the power and precision that generalisation secures, science was encouraged on the one hand to hope that by extending its network of general relations it would at length completely encompass the individual, on the other to despise the particular as mere 'stuff' of no account save as it was formed by participation in general ideas. It was mainly the former tendency that led to the philosophic indifference to mere history and experience as unscientific that characterizes Descartes, Bacon and Hobbes for example. The latter tendency shows itself in Schopenhauer's singularly inconsistent contention that history is a mere hurly-burly (*Wirrwarr*), only the accidental form of the appearance of the idea.



in a realm of ends the order and meaning would be primarily the outcome of the purposes of the active beings composing it. only to discursive intellects such as ours could this order emanating from individual agents appear as a warp and woof of external law shaping some primordial stuff. As naturalism claims to approximate to a complete formulation of this phenomenal order, so spiritualism may claim to approximate to an interpretation of the underlying reality; but it will have this advantage, that while it may be possible, setting out from mind, to account for mechanism it is impossible, setting out from mechanism, to account for mind.

Such an approximation to a spiritualistic interpretation we actually have in the history of the living world. Here we are ever in the presence of individual things, from which science indeed sets out, but to which it can never return, individuals marked down by dates and places and actually designated or admitting of designation by proper names<sup>1</sup>, individuals who have no 'doubles,' whose like all in all we never shall meet again. The events with which we have here to deal are the unique acts and deeds that have their origin in individual centres of experience, not events that seem to occur uniformly as resultants of universal and unvarying law. Further, it is not the intrinsic nature of objects but their value for the particular individual that immediately determines each one's attitude towards them; and as the individuals vary so do their interests and pursuits. But *quidquid petitur petitur sub specie boni*: the idea of the good,

<sup>1</sup> To which therefore no concept is adequate.

as Plato long ago taught, is here the supreme category<sup>1</sup>. If however there were as many goods as there are individuals and all were disparate and independent, this would not help us much. But the individuals of history are none of them isolated, for though no two be altogether alike no two are altogether different. So community and co-operation become actual goods, struggle a possible evil calling for readjustment, and the harmonious realisation of individual ends the ideal consummation, the "one far off divine event to which the whole creation moves."

Meanwhile the course of history shows us the gradual building-up of society and civilisation and therewith the attainment at each advance of ends that were inconceivable at an earlier stage. But these ever-widening social groups and ends of ever-increasing scope are still in every case individual and concrete. The subordinate individuals or the particular aims which the wider embrace are still to be regarded as members or constituents of an articulate whole and not as instances of a general class, in which the content diminishes as the extent increases<sup>2</sup>; for in these historical wholes, we must again insist, there is never complete homogeneity of parts. On the contrary, the higher, over-individual ends, as they are sometimes called,—politics, industry, science, literature, art—imply a differentiation among men that in spite of its significance would defy classification. The more organized the community the more diverse the individuals it includes, and the more man appears

<sup>1</sup> *Rep.* vi. 505 A

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Rickert, *Die Grenzen der naturwissenschaftlichen Begriffsbildung*, 1902, p. 394.

as the historical animal. At the same time the realisation of these ends invests him, so to say, with a new environment, a metamorphosis of nature, an artificial, humanly created, medium, which throws the immediate environment of the naked and resourceless troglodyte more and more into the background. *Entre l'homme et la Nature*, said Comte, *il faut l'humanité*.

Still, it will be objected, beyond humanity and history, beyond, if you will, the whole realm of sentient life, Nature is there all the while, and there as no mere background but as the basis of the whole, the fundamental plasma which can only be shaped because it is itself determinate and orderly. Granting this we may yet urge that there is nothing in Nature, when we try to envisage it as a whole, that is incompatible with a spiritualistic interpretation. In the historical world we place determinate agents first, and the order and development which we observe we trace to their action and interaction. It has never been shown that we need, nor made clear that we can, interpret Nature otherwise.

One problem of supreme importance to such an interpretation does however arise, and this problem the objection we are considering directly suggests. We have only to an insignificant extent shaped Nature, we have not made it; we are not even settlers from a foreign clime but aborigines seemingly sprung from the soil. But the principle of continuity is supposed to turn the edge of this objection, and to this principle pampsychism appeals, though it does not rest on that alone. "Nature never makes leaps," said Leibniz. Every organism has its peculiar environment, the simpler the one is the simpler

the other will be. Recent knowledge has shown the range of life to extend far into the region of what was once regarded as the inanimate, purely physical world, and it has further shown the lowest known organisms to be highly complex and extremely varied. But there is nothing to suggest that we have reached the limits of life: all we can say is that our senses and the artificial aids and methods of research at present available do not enable us to discriminate between yet simpler forms of life and *their* environment; not that these do not exist. There is then, it is contended, no warrant for the assumption of a completely inanimate environment at all: we ought rather with Spinoza to conclude that "all individual things are animated, albeit in diverse degrees<sup>1</sup>." We ought so to conclude too, because—continuity apart—what can neither do nor suffer, what is nothing for itself, is truly nothing at all; for—again as Spinoza maintained—every individual thing, so far as in it lies, endeavours to persist in its own being<sup>2</sup>. On this, the pampsychist view, Nature thus resolves into a plurality of conative individuals; and the range and complexity of the correspondence between a given individual and its environment marks the stage to which it has advanced in its interaction with the rest. But to cite Spinoza is to give point to the difficulty that has still to be met.

Will a plurality of interacting subjects account for itself and for the unity which interaction implies? This is the question which in the following lectures we shall have carefully to discuss. Suppose we decide this question in the negative, that will not affect the

<sup>1</sup> *Ethics*, II. 13, Schol.

<sup>2</sup> *Ethics*, III. 6.

main issue as between spiritualism and naturalism: for such ground of the world of living and acting things would—if we should be led to assume it—surely be itself living and acting. In any case then we have a realm of ends, the only question is:—what is its constitution, how is its harmony secured; is it, so to say, a more or less orderly democracy, is it a limited monarchy, or is it possibly an absolute one?

This is none other than the old and formidable problem of the One and the Many; and this, it has been said, will be *the* philosophical problem of the twentieth century. Certainly there are few questions more to the fore at the present time. It is fitting then that with this we should begin. But with such a problem much depends on the side from which we begin and the method that we adopt. The great idealistic systems of the nineteenth century began with the One as absolute and adopted what may be generally described as a speculative or *a priori* method. Of the greatest of these systems, that of Hegel, even its most sympathetic critics have allowed that, however perfect its ideal may be in itself, its attainment is, and must ever remain, humanly impossible. And this verdict, I do not think it audacious to say, is easy to justify: it simply amounts to protesting that we can never transcend ourselves. The first requisite of philosophy is organic coherence: it cannot, so to say, have two independent growing points, and so long as experience is the one there can be no finality about philosophy. As experience advances its meaning will unfold itself to reflexion more and more: so further progress makes further regress possible and what is last in the order of experience brings us nearer to what is first in the

order of knowledge. On experience as it develops the ideal of the pure reason may rise to perish never, but it was certainly not discernible at first; and if present now, its full meaning is ineffable still. The superlative, the absolute, the infinite are limiting notions, and for aught we know are notions only: ideals of the reason they may be, but then reason itself is an ideal. There seems no end to the process of rationalising experience, but—as I said at the outset—at least there may be progress, and our confidence, that, as Hegel maintained, the real is rational and the rational real may deepen as we proceed. But we must start where we are and continue as we have begun, letting knowledge grow from more to more. To say this is to imply that those idealists who have attempted to begin with the Absolute have not really done so. That they have not has been amply proved by their critics and admitted by their apologists. But at any rate in the flights of pure thought up to the Absolute the atmosphere of empirical fact by which it is sustained is too diffused to be detected, and when that summit is reached the particular, the many, of actual experience tend to disappear or to be explained away. Thus their “alleged independence”—in which we empirically believe—Mr Bradley declares “is no fact, but a theoretical construction; and so far as it has a meaning, that meaning contradicts itself, and issues in chaos.... The plurality then sinks to become merely an integral aspect in a single substantial unity, and the reals [the many] have vanished<sup>1</sup>.” Nevertheless the inevitable reaction, which the impossibility of philosophical finality involves, has already set in: indeed Mr Bradley

<sup>1</sup> *Appearance and Reality*, 2nd edn, p. 143.

prophesied as much: "Monadism," he says, "on the whole will increase and will add to the difficulties which already exist<sup>1</sup>." Whether the second half of his forecast will turn out to be as true as the first remains to be seen. At any rate the plurality of the realm of ends is what is most patent to us at the outset: if the difficulties of Pluralism point the way to Singularism<sup>2</sup> they will at least serve to make the character of the One clearer than any 'cheap and easy monism' evolved at a dialectical show—such as Mr Bradley in a famous passage has himself described<sup>3</sup>—can ever do. It will be well too as regards method to let the spirit of the time lead us; turning aside from what has been described as "Naturalism's desert on the one hand and the barren summit of the Absolute on the other," to follow the historical method as far as possible in tracing the gradual evolution of ideas, but trusting to speculative methods only in the endeavour to divine the most satisfactory solution of the problems to which they gave rise.

In the next lecture then we must try to ascertain the genesis of the ideas which lead to the problem of the One and the Many, and then we may proceed to examine the solution which those who are called Pluralists or Personal Idealists uphold.

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit* p. 118, *fin*

<sup>2</sup> This term, first used by Kulpe as the correlative of Pluralism (*Einleitung in die Philosophie*, § 14), may not be happy, but it is after all better than Henism; and it is not misleading as Monism according to present usage, i.e. with a qualitative as well as a quantitative sense, certainly is. Wolf, who invented the term, used it, as I have done, only in the qualitative sense as applicable either to materialism or to spiritualism.

<sup>3</sup> *Principles of Logic*, p. 533.

## LECTURE II.

### THE ONE AND THE MANY.

It is very commonly assumed that idealism or spiritualism is synonymous with theism, or at least inseparable from it. It is true that idealists are rarely atheists, but it would be dogmatism to assert offhand that they cannot be. Still less can we say that if not monotheists, they must be *pantheists*, in the sense of denying the reality of the world altogether as Spinoza is commonly credited with doing, and so was called by Hegel not atheist but acosmist. *Pantheism* in the sense of identifying the world with God is but 'a polite atheism,' as Schopenhauer has said, but such a pantheism is not compatible with idealism. So "from a world of spirits to a Supreme Spirit is a *possible* step," is all I ventured to say in my former lectures at Aberdeen<sup>1</sup>; for it is not straightway evident that it is a necessary one. Many of those called pluralists or personal idealists deny the necessity, and some even question the possibility of any such step.—We cannot, of course, admit a multiplicity without any unity. A One of some sort is obviously implied in talking of a world at all; but may not the Many account for their own unity instead of requiring a One, an individual of



another order, to account for them? May not the unity of the world be analogous to that of a society, so presupposing the individuals associated? Or must we assume beyond and above the Many and their unity an Absolute One, of which they are somehow the appearance? This is the problem of the One and the Many to which we have now to turn. As an essential preliminary to any attempt to deal with it we have agreed first of all to ascertain, if we can, how the ideas of the One and the Many arise in the course of advancing experience and thought.

The correlation or duality involved in all experience, that namely of an individual subject and its objective environment, is often described as a duality of Ego and Non-Ego, of Self and Not-Self. But it is important to note, on the one hand, that this objective Not-Self is not presented as another self, but simply as an 'Other.' Also it is equally important to note, on the other hand, that this objective 'Other' has always for experience a certain continuity or unity, which—though it differentiates more and more, as experience develops—never completely disintegrates into a discrete manifold or mere plurality. Again the relation of the subject to this objective continuum is always one of more or less dependence. But the subject, as we have already seen, is not wholly inert: it is always active and selective to some extent; otherwise, indeed, it could never be aware of its dependence. As experience extends and the objective differentiates, the subject too advances in initiative and acquires new powers; but never, so to say, overtops and outstrips the Non-Ego. On the contrary, increasing knowledge though it secures in-

creasing power also deepens this sense of dependence. Primitive man attempts to subjugate or circumvent Nature by magic, but science has long since taught us that our ends of self-preservation and physical betterment are only to be attained by such adaptation and adjustment as Nature allows.

But the advance of Science, it is said, does not merely deepen this sense of our ultimate dependence on Nature, it also tends increasingly to emphasize Nature's complete independence of us. We talk of our life as a struggle, but at least Nature does not deign to struggle with us. We talk of shaping and selecting; but the further our knowledge of this interminable Other confronting us extends, the more inevitable to many seems the conclusion that in truth it is we who are shaped and selected by Nature. Such in brief is *die gelauterte Naturbetrachtung des denkenden Naturmenschen*, as Haeckel calls it; and the only Absolute One, in which Naturalism believes, is the result. And what ultimately is this Absolute which Haeckel's clarified vision discerns? It is permanent substance; more definitely, it is the kinetic world-ether, whose mass and energy are eternally conserved, and whence the Many result as atomic souls by an inexplicable condensation or concentration. This world-ether is the only 'creative divinity' that Haeckel allows. And Herbert Spencer comes very near to this when, in the recent revision of his *First Principles*, he suggests that "the only supposition having consistency is that that in which consciousness inheres is the all-pervading ether<sup>1</sup>." We have then here that form of so-called *pantheism*—in which all the stress is on the

<sup>1</sup> *First Principles*, 1900, p. 201.

'*pan*'—the pantheism that maintains—as Schopenhauer put it—"that the world is there in virtue of its own internal energy and through itself"—a world in which consciousness, according to him, is a secondary and unfortunate episode.

But this polite atheism, as I have already said, we cannot accept. Though but a reed, to use Pascal's words, man is a thinking reed, and cannot be merged in or emerge from such a world, however vast it be. Man only knows the world as it faces him and he interacts with it, and he knows it only so far as he finds it intelligible. And finding it intelligible he can only conclude that it is not after all an alien Other but has its ground and meaning either in another self or in a community of selves. This much we are taking as already clear. Let us turn then to consider the idea of the Many, which in fact we reach first and which leads to a concept of the Absolute still older than that of objective substance.

The individual subject soon learns to distinguish certain objective differentiations or bodies, in form and behaviour resembling that particular differentiation which is present in all its own experience as the body or organism that it is said to animate. These other bodies it regards as each one animated by a self, and it often finds that it is itself so regarded by them. But such other selves only tell on the individual's experience, because their bodies form parts of the one objective whole that is so far common to them all, and through which all their intercourse and interaction are mediated. That is to say, only the bodies and their movements are presented as objects, the indwelling selves (or souls) and their experiences are not thus

presented. To mark this difference we may adopt Clifford's term and call these other selves and their experience 'ejects.' In the infancy of the human race this ejective analogy ran riot: primitive philosophy, if we may credit the untutored savage with such a luxury, found life and mind every where. But it was still life or mind set in the matrix of a common environment, possessing always a definite embodiment and location there, in and manifesting itself solely by this means. We can imagine other selves transcending ourselves indefinitely, as we can imagine them indefinitely lower than ourselves, in what we call the scale of being. But if we hold to the continuity which a scale of being implies, we must imagine them all—higher and lower alike—as subjects in correlation with objects and not as in themselves absolute or complete. As Hegel's unfortunate colleague, Beneke, was fond of maintaining in opposition to him:—"The human mind is incapable of devising or excogitating anything absolutely; on the contrary it must derive either from external or from internal experience the essential elements of all that it imagines or thinks<sup>1</sup>."

On the lines then of that experience which brings us into communication with our fellow-creatures, the experience that underlies the animism, mythology, and polytheism of primitive culture, we can at best only imagine an experient who is *primus inter pares*, at any rate so far as the duality of subject and object is concerned: we cannot reach on these lines the thought of an Absolute One. Even the living and true God, who is the object of worship in monotheistic religions, cannot be identified with the Absolute, for worship im-

<sup>1</sup> *System der Metaphysik*, 1840, p. 496.

plies mutual distinction and mutual interest. Moreover the history of religion shows clearly that the idea of a supreme and only God has been developed through polytheism, and has so far an anthropomorphic basis. For "pure monotheism," as Dr Caird has said, "God was merely one subject among other subjects; and though lifted high above them, the source of all their life, was yet related to them as an external and independent will<sup>1</sup>." But the point on which we have to insist is rather that to be a subject at all, in any sense that we can understand—so long that is as the term subject carries any meaning for us—is to be confronted by an Other as object. A supreme subject then taken alone, no less than the objective World so taken, is but a one-sided abstraction and cannot be veritably an absolute reality.

Certainly, it will be said, the true, the absolute Absolute is not exclusively subjective, still less exclusively objective: it is the unity of both.—Mythology had its cosmogony and even its theogony, but in rising towards the idea of a Supreme Spirit, speculative monotheism, at all events, has tended to conceive both God and the World *sub specie aeternitatis*. The entire objective world and the many finite subjects which interact with it or within it, in all their totality and in all their distinctness, are, it is said, to be conceived as eternally present to God as His own creative intuition and self-manifestation. The world *is* for God too, but not as for us, merely as given fact, but entirely as thought or deed. This sublime ideal is again a limit towards which our thought can only approximate; and the history of thought shows not only how gradually

<sup>1</sup> *The Evolution of Religion*, 1893, Vol. II. p. 72.

the advance towards it has been made: it shows also that difficulties emerge as this ideal is more distinctly conceived.

But let us note the steps. All finite beings, we have found, are in part passive and only in part active; but they appear as increasingly active the higher in the scale of being they stand: God as the Supreme is then to be regarded as purely active and wholly free from external constraint. Whereas *we* can only shape and arrange so far as the elements and forces of nature permit, for God there is no nature; no need for mechanism to transform 'chaos without form and void' into a cosmos teeming with purpose and life: for him there is only his own creation. But this idea of creation, creation 'out of nothing,' is hard to seize. Not only does the Mosaic account—with its void and formless earth, its primeval darkness and the spirit of Elohim brooding over the waters—fail to reach it; but the philosophic speculations of Plato and Aristotle failed to reach it too. Both recognise a *materia prima* as a sort of half-real, indeterminate, potential stuff—wholly receptive and yet more or less recalcitrant—to which form and life are imparted, but which itself was never made. All this suggests a generative process, nature but not creation; indeed Plato, in the *Timaeus* at all events, compares this primary matter, as Aristotle called it, to a nurse or receptacle of all generation<sup>1</sup>. Such ideas point to a dualism not to an absolute Unity: God and Nature are distinct. And, in fact, both Plato and Aristotle in different ways explicitly separate Nature as the sensible

world from an intelligible world which is the direct object of the divine thought and contemplation. Between the two worlds they fail to establish any satisfactory connexion<sup>1</sup>; but if we leave the sensible world out of account, we have in the Platonic world of ideas and in the divine *νόησις νοήσεως* of Aristotle a unity of subjective and objective which we may fairly call the Absolute, since it is perfect and complete in itself. Of this the sensible world is a superfluous and imperfect—nay an impossible—replica, that can neither really be nor be really known.

And if we are to be in earnest with the notion of creation out of nothing does it not equally eliminate any idea of generation or of reproduction, does it not suggest that sort of eternal 'static perfection' which such processes as producing, impressing, or in-forming, exclude? A subject who is *actus purus*, clear therefore of all the limitations pertaining to space and time, who apprehends not by sense and comprehends not by discursive thinking, what object can he have which is not himself? Must we not say then that he does not *make* even out of nothing, for what is made cannot be its Maker? and yet if the Maker is absolute, what else can it be? He acts, but his acts are immanent not transeunt: he becomes his own Other only that he may be conscious of himself, and so we call him *causa sui*, and interpret this as meaning an absolute self-consciousness. Such at any rate has been the usual outcome of philosophic monotheism: it tends to end in acosmism. Aristotle's position, for example, is summed up by Dr Caird as "the pure self-conscious-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Caird, *The Evolution of Theology in the Greek Philosophers*, 1904, Vol. II. pp. 238 ff.

ness of God, in which subject and object and the activity that relates them to each other—*νοῦς, νοητόν* and *νόησις*—are perfectly unified and which, therefore, is complete in itself without reference to any other object"—but such absolute self-consciousness "cannot logically be conceived as going beyond itself to create the finite world of movement and change<sup>1</sup>." The same dualism between God and the world reappears in the philosophy of Plotinus—a philosophy in some respects an amalgam of the Platonic and the Aristotelian—the same inability, that is to say, to show, as Dr Caird puts it, "how God, who is absolutely complete in himself, can yet be the source of existences which are external to him and not included in the process of his own life<sup>2</sup>." In the philosophy of Spinoza, to which, as already said, the name acosmism was first applied, this difficulty is specially apparent. His many expositors have failed to show any conceivable connexion between what he called *natura naturata* and God, in whom all the modes and distinctions of the former disappear, and whose existence, as Spinoza himself has said, is "*toto genere* different from theirs."

In fact, observing that 'creation out of nothing' has another side—*ex nihilo nihil fit*—we might not unfairly say that this is the side which the acosmic tendency of Absolutism inevitably emphasizes. The world of finite existences created out of nothing is nothing; that is to say, it is *Schein* not *Sein*, appearance not reality, as the Eleatics first proclaimed;

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.* II. p. 241.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.* II. p. 257.



it is the Mâyâ of Brahmanism, the inexplicable illusion enveloping the One, that

...like a dome of many-coloured glass  
Stains the white radiance of eternity.

But the conclusion that reality cannot be Many led naturally to a yet further development of the idea of the Absolute. The Absolute in the end was conceived not so much as the unity *of* subject and object but rather as a unity that transcends both. Such an Absolutism we find, for example, in the One of Plotinus, the Substance of Spinoza and the *Neutrum* of Schelling. And I fear we must allow that those who would add Hegel's Absolute Idea to the list are probably right, unless indeed we are willing to admit that it is—as he himself as good as says—not the Absolute but only its shadow. But there is still a step. After all, we and all our speculation belong to the world of so-called 'spurious existence'; and as to the One, so transcendently different from all that we know—none of our concepts are applicable to it. It is *Nicht* in contrast to *Icht*, as Eckhart quaintly says. We ascend to it, as the 'negative theology' of the Scholastic mysticism taught, by dropping one after another every determinate predicate, so that we end by saying with Proclus that the One or God is above substance and life and intelligence, and cannot even be called One except figuratively; or with Basilides that it is rather to be called absolute non-existence, or again with the author of the *Theologia germanica* that it must be called Nothing, by which is meant that it is nothing of all that created things can conceive, know,

think or name<sup>1</sup>. No doubt the mystics did not intend by this rejection of all positive determinations to imply that there was no God or that God was nothing: rather, as Höfding puts it:—"In the mystical concept of God, as well as in the Buddhist concept of Nirvana, it is precisely the inexhaustible positivity which bursts through every conceptual form and turns every determination into an impossibility." It was in this sense that Fichte said that "every so-called concept of God is necessarily that of an idol<sup>2</sup>." Thus not merely graven images are disallowed, but in the end all determinate thoughts, of this super-essential, super-rational, super-personal, nay, super-absolute unity<sup>3</sup> that is neither subject nor object and in which all difference begins and ends.

But there is yet a possible concept of the One to be noticed which experience directly suggests—that of the world-soul, the eject to which the world belongs as its organism. But for the present this notion only interests us in that it formed a sort of *tertium quid* or mediating principle by which Plato and his Neoplatonic followers attempted to connect the permanent and intelligible world with the sensible world of the finite many that ever change and pass. And the attempt is obviously futile, for from the point of view of the Absolute there is no sensible world with which to connect itself—were such connexion in itself possible.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. art. 'Mysticism' by Prof. Pringle-Pattison in *Ency. Brit.*; Mansel, *The Gnostic Heresies*, 1874, p. 146; Höfding, *Philosophy of Religion*, 1910, § 21, and note 37.

<sup>2</sup> *Werke*, v. p. 267.

<sup>3</sup> So Nicholas of Cusa. Cf. Caird, *Evolution of Religion*, II. pp. 73 f.

The world-soul is really one term in an emanation to which the very fulness of the Absolute somehow gives rise, but which as little concerns it, as the chance reflexion of its beams affects the effulgence of the sun itself. This ingenious analogy of emanation suggested by the solar radiation, though common in ancient thought, is most fully elaborated by Plotinus. As it is the precise converse of the modern doctrine of evolution, this process might be conveniently called devolution; for as that is a progress from the lower to the higher this is a decline from the higher to the lower. With every remove there is not only less perfection but seemingly also more plurality, more diffusion. The *νοῦς*, which proceeds immediately from the One, is already beset with the duality that even intuition implies; the world-soul, which follows next, is necessarily pluralised into particular souls; each of these in turn is resolved into higher and lower faculties by its relation to the body which it shapes and informs, while this body again is infinitely divisible. Beyond all is matter as mere indeterminate emptiness, darkness and evil, the utter contrary in all respects of the absolute fulness, light and perfection of the One. In a word plurality and separation with their broken lights are the marks of imperfection and unreality: our very birth, i.e. the assumption of a body, is in part a sin, in part a punishment; and the only remedy for this evil lies in a mystic reunion with, and absorption in, the One.

We have thus passed in review several ideals of a supreme Unity which speculation, regardless of experience, has elaborated—an Absolute Object, an Absolute Subject, an Absolute Self-consciousness, and various

attempts to transcend such duality as consciousness implies. The first two we reject not as being *one* but as being one-sided. since subject and object are essentially correlative, neither alone can be absolute. Still even these ideals point the moral that our whole review suggests—*Nulla vestigia retrorsum*. An absolute reached by way of abstraction is the lion's den, where all plurality disappears. In whatever sense you say absolute in that sense you cannot say many. If there were an absolute substance or an absolute subject there could not be many substances or subjects, unless these terms were equivocally used; as substance for example was by Descartes, and subject by Fichte. And if absolute means perfect and complete, why should—nay, how can—what is in itself absolute become splintered up into infinite modes that are neither perfect nor complete? We can imagine them as mutually determining each other, but for it they are but 'invulnerable nothings' with which it has no concern. This is the difficulty that has been specially emphasized by critics of Spinoza. It recurs in a more concrete form, but then as illustrating the one-sidedness of an absolute object, in the naive procedure of such thinkers as Spencer or Haeckel when they jump from a homogeneous plenum or uniform all-pervading ether to the discrete atoms into which it somehow has to be, and yet nohow can be, resolved—unless some directing agency or prime mover be forthcoming from without. Similarly the Absolute Ego of Fichte can only be got under way with the help of an unintelligible *Anstoss* (or impact) determining it to posit its non-Ego.

We come then to the ideal of an absolute experience as the unity, it might seem, of Absolute Subject and Absolute Object, an Absolute that is no longer one-sided and without distinctions. But again there can be only one such consciousness, and it must be transparently clear, a light, so to say, in which is no darkness at all. In our experience the contemplation of what we sometimes call the eternal truths of reason and again the intuitive certainty of our consciousness of self come nearest to this ideal. We find accordingly that ancient speculation laid more stress on the former, as in Aristotle's *νόησις νοήσεως*; and modern on the latter, as in Hegel's *sich selbst denkende Idee*: though both aspects are always present. Outside such an Absolute there can be nothing at all, and within it nothing that is imperfect, mutable or obscure. The more clearly we realise this ideal the more inevitably three conclusions force themselves upon us: (1) Here there is nothing wanting: this intelligible world is perfect and complete in itself, (2) from this transcendent standpoint the existence of the finite Many—the sensible world—seems impossible, and (3), granting its existence, the connexion between the two worlds is inexplicable—inexplicable at least apart from assumptions incompatible with the character of such an ideal. The way upward to this by abstraction and idealisation is comparatively easy—though such methods cannot pretend to yield knowledge; but the way back has in fact only been possible by means of myths and metaphors, which are not even logically consistent. Not-being or the non-existent is always endowed with some sort of potentiality or receptivity, which

...the One Spirit's plastic stress

Sweeps through.....

Torturing the unwilling dross, that checks its flight,

To its own likeness, as each mass may bear.

We talk of creation out of nothing. But if the qualification 'out of nothing' has any meaning at all it implies a transeunt activity on the part of the Creator and a certain lack of reality on the part of the creature—a lack of reality which sinks back to complete unreality when the creature is compared with the Creator, as Meister Eckhart, for example, maintained. But on the other hand what possible meaning can we assign to transeunt activity on the part of the Absolute? If then we emphasize the notion of creation simply and regard the creative activity as purely immanent, then as with Spinoza *causa* is the same as *ratio*; what is said to be created is the intelligible world, where, *sub specie aeternitatis*, all things follow from the 'nature' of God "in the same way as from the nature of the triangle it follows from eternity and for eternity that its three interior angles are equal to two right angles<sup>1</sup>."

I have referred to the method by which such ideals of the Absolute are reached as a method of abstraction and as, therefore, necessarily defective. It will be well, if possible, to make this clearer. What we may call the three unities of experience, the unity of the subject, the unity of the object, and the unity of both in self-consciousness, are hardly to be questioned. Now the objective side of experience, to begin with that, is always a complex or differentiated whole; the more

<sup>1</sup> *Ethics*, I. xvii. note.

primitive the experience the fewer, the simpler, and the vaguer the differentiations; but an objective continuum wholly devoid of diversity would yield no experience. Yet such a homogeneous whole is just what we reach by abstracting first from all the qualitative differences of particular bodies, and then from their particularity or discreteness; in place of an ordered cosmos there then remains only a continuous plenum, as in the Cartesian concept of matter or the modern concept of a primordial ether. Mistaking abstraction for simplification, we call that absolute which is really only above all relations because it is completely indeterminate. As we have already seen, the cosmos or concrete whole cannot be called absolute, if we regard it as what is experienced, that is as objective; but this abstract resolution of it into an *ἄπειρον* escapes such one-sidedness, only because this cannot be objective. Turning to the ideal of an Absolute Subject, we find that this again is reached by an abstract procedure, though a different one. Generalisation up to an ideal limit is out of the question here; instead of that we have one phase of the empirical subject selected and made absolute. Ignoring the receptive side of experience altogether we try to conceive a pure activity. In Fichte's phraseology, *Gegenstand* implies *Widerstand*, object implies opposite: a subject then for whom there can be no opposition is one for whom there can be no object, no other. It again escapes the charge of one-sidedness only because such an Absolute, though called by Fichte an Ego, is no subject in any sense that we can understand, as Fichte was careful to maintain. Finally, the ideal of an

Absolute experience is reached by abstraction, whether we regard its contents as the intelligible world of eternal ideas or as the *identity* of subject and object in self-consciousness. The Platonic system of archetypal ideas or eternal patterns is after all for our experience not independent of the many nor prior to them, but is simply a system of abstractions resulting from such comparisons, generalisations, and analogies, as the sensible world itself suggests to us. A consciousness again which is self-consciousness and nothing more, which is solely and completely a 'self-revelation,' whose whole content is self—self explicated in self and through self and for self, such a consciousness is from the point of view of experience an abstraction. A part of such experience as we can understand is taken for the whole; for we are never conscious of self save as we are conscious of not-self. The two factors are analytically distinct but not actually separable: so far then self-consciousness alone seems to be an abstraction. If we nevertheless elect to regard this ideal as the sole and ultimate reality there seems no place left for finite experiences and the sensible world, as I have already urged. And not merely so, but the impulse to pass beyond multiplicity to unity, to which we have so far yielded, carries us on to a final simplicity beyond all explication, where mysticism hails 'Naught as everything and everything as Naught.' If on the other hand, keeping to experience, we admit the abstract character of this ideal, then we have the problem of the unity of the many still on our hands.

But what sort of unity can we reach if we refrain from all attempts absolutely to transcend the Many?



A mere totality or aggregate is obviously no true unity, even though we could know—which is, in fact, impossible—that it was an absolutely totality. Some community or reciprocity there must be: the question is how little will suffice. It seems clear that either each must be connected with all in at least one way or that all must be so connected with some one. There must be either a universal principle directly relating all or a supreme, though not absolute, individual, to whom all are related. The latter will imply the former, so far as through their common relation to the Supreme One all would be related—though it were only indirectly—to each other. But the converse will not hold; that is to say, the direct relation of all to each other will not necessarily imply a Supreme One. Of such a fundamental and universal relation we have an instance according to the atomic theory in universal gravitation. But of course in a realm of ends the universal relation can only be analogous to this in the one aspect of being universal: the two cannot be identified—though they may be related. Empirical evidence of such a universal relation there can hardly be: we are left then to assume it and to frame some more or less hazardous hypothesis as to its nature. I say nothing for the present of any difficulty besetting the idea of an absolute plurality of any sort, a plurality of beings only relatively dependent and therefore relatively independent—independent, that is, so far as their bare existence is concerned. This, on our present supposition, has to be taken as a fact. The idea of a Supreme One as *primus inter pares* again can hardly admit of empirical verification: the very supposition seems to involve an empirically unattainable

limit. If we nevertheless make believe that in 'pure thought' this limit is attained and ask how we are to represent the relation of all to this Supreme One, the old ideal Absolute again looms upon us and threatens to absorb the Many altogether. We may recoil from this and say: There might have been an Absolute, provided there had been no Many, but holding to the reality of these we can regard God as supreme, but not as absolute: then we seem to save the Many, but we have only a 'finite God,' or rather the idea of one.

Thus we seem shut up to what looks like a choice of evils. Without an Absolute One it seems hopeless to attempt to account for, and hazardous to attempt to unify, the Many; and with such an Absolute it seems as hopeless to attempt to retain what independence and freedom the Many appear *prima facie* to possess. And this seemingly inevitable perplexity shows itself throughout the history of religion in a constant alternation between first claiming and then abdicating a distinct position for Man over against God. Think, for example, of the counter doctrines of Augustine and Pelagius and the controversies to which both in ancient and modern times they gave rise. Or again take the vast literature of religious mysticism, from which one instance may suffice:—Eckhart who said: Couldst thou annihilate thyself for a moment thou wouldst possess all that God is in himself, also said, "I am as necessary to God as God is necessary to me." In this connexion I am glad of an opportunity of quoting Mr Bradley, from whose main position I am forced to dissent. "Religion," he says, "prefers to put forth statements which it feels are untenable, and to correct

them at once by counter-statements, which it finds are no better. It is then driven forwards and back between both, like a dog which seeks to follow two masters.... We may say that in religion God tends always to pass beyond himself. He is necessarily led to end in the Absolute, which for religion is not God. God, whether a 'person' or not, is, on the one hand, a finite being and an object to man. On the other hand, the consummation, sought by the religious consciousness, is the perfect unity of these terms [the Absolute and God]. And, if so, nothing would in the end fall outside God. But to take God as the ceaseless oscillation and changing movement of the process, is out of the question. On the other side the harmony of all these discords demands...the alteration of their finite character. The unity implies a complete suppression of the relation, as such; but, with that suppression, religion and the good have altogether, as such, disappeared. If you identify the Absolute with God, that is not the God of religion. If again you separate them, God becomes a finite factor in the Whole. And the effort of religion is to put an end to, and break down, this relation—a relation which, none the less, it essentially presupposes. Hence, short of the Absolute, God cannot rest, and, having reached that goal, he is lost and religion with him<sup>1</sup>."

In the history of philosophy again we find the same perplexing alternation between asserting and denying a position for the Many incompatible with the absoluteness of the One: we find this not only in the form of a reaction from absolutism to pluralism in successive

<sup>1</sup> *Appearance and Reality*, pp. 446 f.

thinkers but what is more remarkable we find it—and find it invariably—within systems of philosophy that are avowedly philosophies of the Absolute. And yet in truth it is not remarkable, for it could not really be otherwise. *Ex vi termini*, there can be no reality distinct from the Absolute. But if *X*, *Y* and *Z* assert this absolute Reality they must thereby distinguish themselves from it, and even distinguish themselves the more the more distinctly they seek to realise their own inclusion within it. To deny their own individual reality at such a time is out of the question further, because only through this have they any notion of reality at all. But at other times they easily forget it; as the naturalist, for example, forgets the subjective implications of experience when engrossed in its objects. Nay, they even assume, once the summit of their speculation is attained, that their necessary starting-point, the distinct reality of the Many, is transcended and annulled. But the feat of kicking down the ladder by which you have climbed is logically possible only when the conclusion reached is at once a necessary consequence of the premises and also in itself absurd. No doubt there is always the semblance of a purely *a priori* procedure in most philosophies of the Absolute: the entire construction claims to be the work of pure thought, true independently of all finite experience. But Descartes' *Cogito ergo sum*, the proposition round which, as Hegel said, the whole of modern philosophy revolves<sup>1</sup>, is in this connexion past all question. And hitherto all attempts, starting from the Absolute to respect the Many as this proposition demands, have

<sup>1</sup> *Encyclopaedia*, § 64.

proved unavailing. The reality of the Many is either flatly contradicted as by the Eleatics; or it remains inexplicable as with Spinoza or Hegel. Thus Spinoza, who begins with an absolutely infinite, that is indeterminate, Substance, ends with a conative Many mutually determining each other. Again with Hegel, the Absolute seems at one time to be a perfect Self with no hint of aught beside or beyond its own completed self-consciousness, and at another not to be a self at all, but only the absolutely spiritual,—art, religion and philosophy—the over-individual<sup>1</sup> ends, as they are sometimes called, which become realised in subjective spirits: not self-conscious Spirit but simply the impersonal Spirit in all spirits.

Thus, as it has been said, “both philosophy and religion bear ample testimony to the almost insuperable difficulty of finding room in the universe for God *and* man. When speculation busies itself with the relation of these two, each in turn tends to swallow up the other. The pendulum of human thought swings continually between the two extremes of Individualism [or Pluralism] leading to Atheism, and Universalism [or Absolutism], leading to Pantheism or Acosmism<sup>1</sup>.”

This reaction is most pronounced when, as has continually happened, the defects of an absolutist philosophy have given rise to an avowed pluralism or even naturalism. Such after Hegel's death was conspicuously the case in the speculation of the Hegelian left, as Strauss called it. So Feuerbach describes his secession from the Hegelian school by saying “God was my

<sup>1</sup> Pringle-Pattison, *Hegelianism and Personality*, 1st edn, p. 153 *fin.*

first thought, reason my second, man my third and last." For him afterwards however Man is the beginning, the middle and the end of religion: theology is thus at bottom anthropology: through social intercourse man attains to self-consciousness, to reason and morality, and the divine is but the idealisation of the best and highest. Hegel's positions then are to be inverted: we must say not that the Absolute is self-consciousness, but that self-consciousness is the Absolute; not that God is love but that love is God, and so forth.—The rigorous pluralism of Herbart again is to be regarded as in large measure a rebound from the absolutism of his teacher Fichte. Still more markedly was the Monadology of Herbart's forerunner, Leibniz, a recoil from the pantheism or acosmism of Spinoza. Spinoza's one substance, essentially indeterminate—every determination being for him a negation—is incompatible with even the imagination of finite things severally striving for self-conservation and mutually determining each other; incompatible with the drama of man's bondage and eventual freedom, for example, which is the main theme of Spinoza's Ethics. Leibniz then takes his notion of conation in thorough earnest and defines "substance as an individual agent." "Were it not for the monads," he allowed, "Spinoza would be right." The mediaeval controversies about universals and the principle of individuation are at bottom instances of the same reaction, and finally the ancient atomism of Leucippus and Democritus was a revolt against the Eleatic singularism.

Obviously the perennial renewal of this conflict is a sign that pluralism has equally failed to reach a

satisfactory solution of the problem of the One and the Many. We must allow, as Adamson has said, that no philosophy has ever managed to reconcile these two notions of an infinite power and of an infinite variety of limited individualised expressions of that power<sup>1</sup>. But at all events as regards method the teaching of history seems clear: the solution is not to be obtained by passing over the Many at the outset trusting to deduce them afterwards from an absolute One that is reached *a priori*. This method has proved itself illusory: the seeming attainment of the One has meant the disappearance of the Many. Against pluralism it can only be urged that it fails or has so far failed to account for the unity that it in fact involves—the unity of individual experience as enlarged by inter-subjective intercourse. But at all events it is, I trust, clear that we cannot begin by ignoring pluralism altogether.

<sup>1</sup> *The Development of Modern Philosophy*, 1903, I. p. 107.

## LECTURE III.

### PLURALISM.

The most striking characteristic of the nineteenth century, so far as philosophical speculation is concerned, was, as we have already noted, the predominance of what we may call Absolutism or Singularism as presented by such different thinkers as Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, Schopenhauer, and others less distinguished. In the lull which followed upon the common collapse of these various forms of Absolutism the rapid advance of scientific knowledge brought Naturalism or Physical Realism for a time to the fore. But the insufficiency of this physical realism to bear the strain put upon it is at length becoming apparent; and so the necessity of interpreting nature in terms of mind is again widely recognised. But the recoil from Absolutism still persists; and accordingly the twentieth century opens with the attempt to work out the idealistic interpretation not in the old way as essentially a devolution of the One, but rather—as far as possible—to represent it as an evolution of the Many. In England, in America, in France, even in Germany—once the stronghold of Absolutism—systems of pluralism, more or less pronounced, are rife. It is hardly practicable and would certainly be tedious to examine them separately and in detail. We shall get a better insight into the new movement if we try to secure distinct ideas of its main



standpoint and its salient features, even though in so doing we have to play the dangerous part of eclectics and attempt to frame a composite synopsis of the *tout ensemble*, a sort of Galtonian portrait or generic image of the group.

The pluralistic standpoint in the main is that historical standpoint which we have already contrasted with the naturalistic. But the ordinary historian is content to recognise Nature as indispensable, so far at least as it is the scene and provides the properties of the drama. But this contrast pluralism claims altogether to transcend. To the distinction of person and thing, of nature and history, it allows only a relative value.—Still we shall best realise the position of pluralism by first attending exclusively to the interaction of living agents in the world commonly recognised as historical; and then, as far as we can and as well as we can, attempting to apply the concepts we derive from this to the interpretation of the world commonly regarded as physical, the phenomena of which science has succeeded in abstractly formulating in terms of matter and motion. Of these concepts perhaps the most characteristic is that of behaviour or conduct. Behaviour is a term appropriate only to what is individual and unique, and is not a mere instance of law and uniformity. No one would ordinarily speak of the *behaviour* of falling bodies; for, in merely gravitating, bodies display no special character. But we might speak of a ship or a balloon as behaving well or ill: such things have a certain individuality and so receive a proper name. *Per contra* the term individuality always implies behaviour. Indeed whenever it is worth while

to give a proper name it is possible also to assign a definite character. Thus Goldsmith talks of "the lazy Scheldt" and the "wandering Po." Now pluralism assumes that the whole world is made up of individuals, each distinguished by its characteristic behaviour; but of course it does not find its real individuals in the rough and ready way of popular impersonation: it would not regard a mountain or a river as a person. Conduct or behaviour implies always some objective or external situation as the *occasion* for every manifestation of activity, but never as its sole and complete *determinant*. There is always some subjective spontaneity or initiative, but there is never any absolute or unconditional activity. Thus, in spite of the etymological identity of atom and individual, pluralism has nothing in common with atomism beyond the bare fact that both recognise a many; for the atom is credited with no spontaneity and is completely determined from without. Atom and individual or monad are then contraries and cannot be identified or really combined. The so-called interaction of atoms will not account for the contingency displayed in the world; but what we know as the conduct or behaviour of cognitive and conative individuals may, it is contended, explain both the contingency and the uniformity that we find there. But, before we proceed to consider at more length this attempt of pluralistic spiritualism thus to interpret the world, it will be well first to inquire what we are to understand by an individual or one of the many, and what by the unity that even their plurality implies.

Of course we cannot start at the beginning, for that

is not where we are. How far towards a hypothetical beginning the principle of continuity will reasonably carry us is just one of the questions we have to decide. But we must start, where alone reflexion on experience can arise, at the level of self-consciousness. We have already seen that singularistic spiritualism or absolutism really commenced its speculative flight from this level, and pluralism is in no better position. In self-consciousness we attain to the explicit knowledge of that duality of self and not-self, of subject and object, without which experience ceases to have any meaning for us. The self of which we are conscious, then, furnishes us with our first paradigm of what we are to understand by the individuals of our plurality. It is assumed that there exists an indefinite variety of selves, some indefinitely higher, some indefinitely lower than ourselves. But even the highest, if there be a highest, will, it is assumed, be only *primus inter pares*, one among the many, and not an Absolute really including them all. Even the lowest also will possess whatever be the irreducible *minimum* essential to being in any sense a subject or self at all.

Such *minimum* implies behaviour directed towards self-conservation or self-realisation. An individual no doubt is often defined as something that cannot be divided without being destroyed, as a clock for instance. But such things are not true individuals or selves: a clock has no interest in, or impulse towards, its own conservation. Self-conservation alone however, strictly taken and regarded as everywhere realised, would result in nothing better than a static world, in which there would be no new events and no history. Such a state as final would

correspond to the complete rest and quiescence with which, according to Spencer's law of equilibration, the drama of evolution must close. As an initial state it would correspond to Leibniz's pre-established harmony contemplated from without, if that were possible: there would be no interaction between individual and individual. But the actual world, as our own experience teaches us, is full of cross-purposes; and therefore self-conservation in general calls for effort and perseverance. —But though self-conservation implies the *minimum* to be striven for, self-development or realisation is still the aim of many, and was perhaps at the beginning the aim of all. Any advantage gained, though it be merely the result of good fortune, will not usually be passively surrendered: its loss would be a painful contraction. Thus a new standard, so to say, of the self to be conserved would be reached. It is plain then that when we talk of self-conservation the main stress is not to be laid on the bare conservation of some metaphysically simple entity, such as the soul of the old rational psychologists. What is meant is rather the maintenance of the most advantageous position attained by the actual self in relation to the world as a whole. This implies that each one is in touch with all the rest collectively and with some more specially. As I have expressed it elsewhere, there is for every subject one *totum objectivum*, which, save in the limiting case, which would answer to an inconceivable beginning of experience, will be more or less differentiated.

By way of summary it may suffice to say that the well-known *Monadology* of Leibniz may be taken as the type, to which all modern attempts to construct

a pluralistic philosophy more or less conform<sup>1</sup>. But the theology on which Leibniz from the outset strove to found his Monadology, is, in the first instance at all events, set aside; and in particular his famous doctrine of pre-established harmony is rejected altogether.<sup>2</sup> The positions retained are first, that every monad 'perceives'<sup>2</sup> every other, secondly, that every monad is appetitive, seeking pleasurable situations, or at least shunning painful ones. In other words, for every monad the totality of the remaining monads constitutes its objective world, in which continuously changing situations result through the persistent endeavours of each to conserve or improve its position. Each, so far as in it lies, is to be conceived as 'proving all things and holding fast that which is good.' Finally, every system of thoroughgoing pluralism accepts the Leibnizian principle of continuity, at least to the extent of maintaining that there is no infinite gap, no complete diversity between, one monad and another, a principle against which the Leibnizian theology itself offends. We may now proceed to consider the pluralistic schemes as exhibited in the world we ordinarily call 'historical.'

Let us imagine a great multitude of human beings, varying in tastes and endowments as widely as human beings are known to do, and let us suppose this multitude suddenly to find themselves, as Adam and Eve did, in an ample Paradise enriched sufficiently with diverse natural resources to make the attainment of a high civilisation possible. At the outset each

<sup>1</sup> Cf. his *Nouveaux Essais*, iv. § 21, and the excellent summary in Hoffding's *History of Philosophy*.

<sup>2</sup> In the Leibnizian sense, that is to say.

must needs fend for himself, selecting the vocation and habitat best adapted to his liking and capacity which chance or his superior competitors left open to him ; though liable to be afterwards ousted by others less favoured in their first lot, but more capable of turning their experience to good account. "On all hands adventure and misadventure," so at the outset we might sum up the whole : the chapter of accidents would seem to be the first chapter of this history, and Fortune with her rudder or wheel the only power to be clearly discerned. In other words, to a reflective spectator at this stage nothing would be more impressive than the contrast between the stability of their natural surroundings on the one hand and the instability of this striving multitude on the other. But gradually this contrast would become less striking. The fittest would tend to rise in the struggle and partly to exploit and control, partly to educate the rest. Custom and imitation would more and more determine the behaviour of the less gifted majority, while the inventions and discoveries of the gifted few would tend in the end to improve the condition of all. Cooperation and division of labour would compass results impossible to individual enterprise, and would at the same time entail a more intimate dependence of each one on his fellows. —The ever accumulating traditions and products of the past would afford a steadily progressing vantage ground of wisdom and wealth for each succeeding age and a corresponding security against the vicissitudes of earlier times. In short, in place of an incoherent multitude, all seemingly acting at random, we should have a social and economic organization, every member of which

had his appropriate place and function, while the ever increasing coincidence of private ends and public ends would tend continually to enhance the unity of the whole.

Turning to the biological world, and regarding the several species of living forms as so many plastic individuals, we should find at an early stage a similar contrast between the continuity and stability of the physical environment and the mutual isolation and ceaseless variation of an indefinite multitude of more or less elementary organisms. And again we should find this contrast gradually diminish as, *pari passu* with the advance of certain forms of life to a higher level of development, what are known as bionomic adaptations came more and more into play.—The primary forms of life apparently are the so-called prototrophic bacteria, lowly organisms which have the power of working up non-living into living materials. But these have no such direct relation to, or concern with, other living beings as all the higher forms of life have and have to an increasing extent the higher in the scale they stand. It would be tedious to attempt to describe, for example, the wide range of such dependence even in the case of *uncivilised* man: the bare enumeration of the many plants and animals indispensable to man in the present state of civilisation would be practically impossible. And all these plants and animals, it must be remembered, depend in turn and in manifold ways on others. Half 'the romance of natural history' lies in such bionomic facts. Think of the many curious adjustments between special plants and special insects on which the very existence of both depends, the plant preparing food for such insects as are fitted to pollinate

its flowers. Or again take the wonderful instances of mimicry by which animals make shift to evade their enemies or delude their prey; or the complicated division of labour prevailing among certain colonies of ants and bees; or, finally, those intimate partnerships between distinct species to which the name of *symbiosis* has been given, where in numerous cases the association is so intimate that the very life of both participants depends upon it. Readers of the *Origin of Species* will recall how Darwin illustrates the wide range of this correlation of organisms from the connexion of cats and red clover through the intervention first of mice and then of bees. The humble-bees fertilise the clover but "the number of humble-bees in any district depends in great measure on the number of field-mice, which destroy their combs and nests," but again "the number of mice is largely dependent, as every one knows, on the number of cats": and thus the cats by keeping down the mice promote the increase of the clover. Similar illustrations might be multiplied indefinitely. Perhaps the most impressive of all is the great length of what are called 'nutritive chains'; under which head we may include the reciprocity that is maintained between plants and animals. Plants alone are able to assimilate inorganic matter: hence in a physiological sense it is true that 'all flesh is grass,' for the food of all animals either consists of vegetables or is ultimately derived from them. On the other hand plants decompose the carbon dioxide which animals exhale, and thus restore to the atmosphere the oxygen which animals need to breathe. "Some of the fresh-water fishes in a pond," one naturalist points out, "depend upon the



supply of small crustaceans (copepods, etc.), and these again [depend] on much minuter organisms (infusorians, diatoms, etc.), and these again, to some extent, on the bacteria which cause the putrefaction of the dead organic matter." Another "has shown that even on the high seas bacteria are present, playing their usual part of 'middlemen between death and life' by transforming dead organic matter into inorganic substances which can be used again by plants<sup>1</sup>." We may then fairly allow that there is a close parallel between the development apparent in the economic aspects of human history and that apparent in the bionomic aspects of natural history. As in the former so in the latter we find a multitude of comparatively isolated and independent units gradually advancing, by the survival of the fittest among innumerable random variations, towards the realisation of 'a vast and complex web of life,' whose myriad fibres are all intertwined, though every one is unique.

If now, from the external correlations of organisms to each other, we pass to the internal correlations within each organism, or from bionomics to what might possibly be called physionomics, we note again the same progress from relatively independent parts, barely conjoined and hardly differentiated, to highly specialised organs intimately associated together in a single living whole. 'Loose colonies' of single-celled organisms are supposed to bridge the gulf between separate unicellular, and individual multi-cellular, organisms; the transition beginning with diminished competition and increased co-operation among the relatively unspecialised

<sup>1</sup> J. Arthur Thomson, *The Science of Life*, p. 193.

cells of each colony<sup>1</sup>. But the specialisation of function and consequent individuality to be found at first is very slight. The common hydra may be halved with impunity so that each segment will restore its missing half, but we cannot in this fashion make two bees or two frogs out of a single mature one. Or again the hydra may be turned inside out and, unless forcibly prevented from resuming its natural shape, will eventually right itself and once more become normal. Obviously no such liberties could be taken with an animal in which more definite sense-organs, limbs, and viscera had been developed. As in bionomics then so in physionomics: every advance entails greater restriction and specialisation of function, but also greater perfection—a more intimate mutual dependence and a closer consensus of members in a more complicated whole.

Though the facts of bionomics and physionomics are most readily described as they are presented, that is to say in objective terms, they are, we may hold, only to be intelligibly interpreted like the facts of economics and social interaction; as implying, that is to say, percipient and conative subjects behaving as severally or jointly intent on self-conservation and betterment. It is easy throughout to recognise more or less striking evidence of experiences discriminated, retained, and turned to account. But now the problem has to be faced of interpreting the inanimate world in like fashion. There we can discern, *prima facie* at all events, no signs of active striving or selective preference or progressive organization: there we find no unique

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Geddes and Thomson, *The Evolution of Sex*, pp. 57, 88 ff., 310 ff.

individuals, no competing purposes to be adjusted, no tentative efforts to be followed at length by success. First and last, everywhere and always, there seems to be only fixity and uniformity. This is a serious crux for the pluralist, let us see how he may deal with it.

First it is to be noted that in the historical world the progress and development of some societies, species and individuals halt at a certain point, so that a stationary state is reached in which custom, instinct and habit are supreme. Among societies we find savage peoples still as backward as the primeval men of the stone age, and we find others as advanced as the Chinese, who nevertheless have remained stationary for thousands of years. Again some existing forms of life,—such as the Nautilus or the Lamp-shell—so-called ‘persistent types,’ have remained practically unaltered almost from the beginning of the geological record, while others—as the horse or the dog, for example—have progressed remarkably within a period that is by comparison recent. And as there are some individuals who are restless, enterprising and inventive to the end of their days, so there are others who early become supine and contented, the slaves of custom and hide-bound with habits, individuals whose chief concern is to avoid disturbance and let well alone. The simpler their standard of well-being and the less differentiated their environment the more monotonous their behaviour will be and the more inert they will appear. •

Now it is to be noted that the environment, resolved into its ultimate constituents, is by the pluralist assumed to be, as Leibniz taught, substantially the same, for all percipients, consisting, in fact, of the percipients

themselves. But the degree and the extent to which clear and distinct perception is reached and retained, in other words the differentiation of the environment for a particular monad, will be proportionate to the organization which it possesses and controls. It is thus not unreasonable to suppose that the gradation found within the known world of life extends indefinitely below it. If then certain of the simplest forms of life that we can detect have persisted throughout the gradual evolution of higher and higher forms; and not merely so but if, further, the existence of such higher forms depends on that of lower, may we not fairly suppose that beyond our ken there are still simpler and more primitive forms capable of existing independently of the lowest that we know, and yet at the same time essential, and therefore prior, to the existence of these? Such an assumption is akin to the bold hypothesis so confidently advanced by Leibniz in a well-known passage of his *Monadology*. "Each portion of matter," he says, "may be conceived as a garden full of plants and as a pond full of fish. But each branch of the plant, each member of the animal, each drop of its juices is also some such garden or pond. And, although the earth and the air separating the plants of the garden or the water separating the fish of the pond, be neither plant nor fish, nevertheless they also contain plants and fish but [these] for the most part too minute to be perceptible by us<sup>1</sup>."

On the important point just mentioned, Leibniz however does not insist. Though the elements, earth, air and water are *essential* to the plants and the plants

<sup>1</sup> *Monadology*, §§ 67, 68.

to the animals, the converse does not hold. Apart from parasitic and symbiotic forms, low-grade organisms do not require the presence of more developed organisms within their environment; and even if these are present, they do not bulk as differentiations of the environment for them, as they do for others higher in the scale. But at every stage the correlation of percipient and environment will still be found; every order of plants or fish will have their appropriate garden or pond, which over against them is by comparison passive, whilst they over against it are by comparison active. It is this activity, this more or less spontaneous behaviour, that according to Leibniz determines the character of every monad. From the physical standpoint it seems frequently possible to isolate special forms of matter, so that they remain chemically unaltered for an indefinite time. According to Leibniz's view what is done is only on a par with what the biologist might do by isolating a number of *Protista* in a globe of water. Let all the water evaporate and the life of its inhabitants is suspended and perhaps extinguished. That some analogous change would not befall the said substances if all the rest of the universe should disappear, I take it no physicist would venture to say. The pampsychist, holding fast to the principle of continuity, maintains—I again repeat—that at all events there are no things wholly inert, devoid of all internal springs of action, and only mechanically related to each other. In a world of such things motion, that is to say change, would be impossible save through the intervention of a transcendent cause or prime mover. This difficulty, which the physicist allows, is, it is

contended, only to be escaped by regarding matter in more or less Leibnizian fashion, as but the manifestation of the interaction of perceptive and appetitive monads or entelechies. The attractions and repulsions of which the physicist speaks only metaphorically are, so the pampsychist maintains, to be taken literally, that is as implying impulses initiated and determined by feeling. Empedocles speculating in the fifth century B.C. is to be hailed as 'the Newton of organic nature,' for his principles of love and hate, Nature's *Wahlverwandtschaften*, or 'elective affinities, have made the whole world kin'.

Now, if we are prepared to admit that this pampsychist or monadistic theory is *in itself* at least perfectly conceivable and consistent, of a piece with and analogous to what we know and understand best, then it is contended in the next place that the facts which seem *prima facie* to make against it can be readily and reasonably explained. First of all we can all think of numberless instances in which what is sensibly simple and homogeneous is really extremely complex and heterogeneous. In fact we may fairly say that there is perhaps no case in which—either directly by closer inspection or indirectly by inference—we do not find some difference between objects that seem to be

<sup>1</sup> Haeckel, *Die Weltrathsel*, 1900, pp. 259, 454. Cf. Renouvier, *Le Personnalisme*, 1903, p. 500. Also Zollner, *Die Natur der Kometen*, 3<sup>te</sup> Aufl. pp. 113 ff. "All the work performed by natural beings," says Zollner, "is determined by feelings of pleasure and pain, and that too in such a manner that the motions within a closed field of phenomena are related as they would be if they were carrying out the unconscious purpose of reducing the painful feelings to a minimum" (p. 119).—A view adopted by biologists, such as Nageli, and probably Reinke and Driesch, and by philosophers such as Paulsen and Wundt.

qualitatively and quantitatively the same. There seems then to be ample warrant *a posteriori* for the principle advanced on *a priori* grounds by Nicholas of Cusa and afterwards endorsed by Leibniz. "There is nothing in the universe," said the former, "that does not enjoy a certain singularity, which is to be found in no other thing<sup>1</sup>." In his correspondence with Samuel Clarke Leibniz wrote:—"There are no two indiscernible individuals. A clever gentleman of my acquaintance, talking with me in the presence of Madame the Electress [of Hanover], thought that he could easily find two leaves entirely alike. The Electress challenged him to do so, and he went up and down a long time seeking in vain. [Even] two drops of water or of milk looked at through a microscope will be found to be diverse. This is an argument against atoms, which not less than a vacuum are repugnant to the principles of true metaphysics<sup>2</sup>."

But the modern pluralists do not usually follow out the principle of continuity as rigorously as Leibniz did. They hold with him that "there are never two beings which are perfectly alike and in which it is not possible to find an internal difference<sup>3</sup>." But they do not usually maintain and indeed from their purely empirical standpoint they could not maintain that there is an actual infinity of monads. In particular they are in no way bound to assume that there are real beings corresponding to any concepts the physicist may find

<sup>1</sup> On Nicolaus Cusanus as a precursor of Leibniz see Latta, *Leibniz, The Monadology, etc.*, 1898, p. 222 *n.* and the references there given.

<sup>2</sup> "Quatrième Écrit à Clarke," *Opera*, Erdmann's edition, p. 755.

<sup>3</sup> *Monadology*, § 9.

it convenient to frame regarding the ultimate constituents of matter. Otherwise indeed, should the theory that matter is but a modification of the ether become established, that, it might be argued, would put an end to pluralism altogether, ether being real and not phenomenal. Pluralism in fact, as we have already seen, has no status at all save as a form of idealism or spiritualism: for if matter can only be phenomenal, it cannot be real. The tendency of science is to diminish the seeming variety of the world and ultimately to eliminate it. Qualities in the end are to be resolved into diverse arrangements of prime atoms, corpuscles, or electrons, differing in nothing but their positions and motions. For pluralism, on the other hand, quality, even haecceity—to use an old scholastic phrase—is vital. If there are real beings answering to the physicist's concept of ultimate atoms then indeed, if personal pluralism is to stand (I use the word 'personal' in the widest possible extent), this atomic pluralism can only be the outside appearance of so many active beings, each of which is something for itself. But all that the pluralist does is to appeal broadly to the principle of continuity and that, said Leibniz, "destroys atoms." In the real world we can nowhere find that exact similarity which the mathematician can readily conceive; and the contention is that it nowhere exists. Appearances suggest it, it may be. But that leads us to a second point.

• There are statistical facts in plenty to show that, where large numbers are concerned, the conduct even of human beings presents aggregate results that are tolerably constant, in spite of the variety of the motives



determining the individual agents and the absence of any concerted action among them. Now many of the constants of science are of the nature of statistical averages, and involve—as science interprets them—numbers enormously in excess of those of social statistics, while at the same time the individuals concerned must be indefinitely simpler. Starting from the statistics available in economics, the most scientific branch of sociology, and supposing that instead of trade returns from a score or two of countries we had returns from one or two thousand, the inhabitants of each being increased a myriad-fold and being also severally vastly more the creatures of habit than men now are, we can imagine such statistics would approximate still more closely to those of the physicist. The physicist, like the statist, is always dealing with aggregates, but unlike the statist he finds the constituent individuals to be beyond his ken. The statist is aware that individual variations underlie his aggregates, but they do not interest him: the physicist is ignorant of those underlying his, and assumes that they do not exist<sup>1</sup>. Accordingly he rests content with abstract and general concepts that turn out in the end to be simply quantitative. But it is impossible to deduce quality from quantity or exhaustively to present concrete experience by means of any scheme of mathematical co-ordinates.

Briefly then the pluralist at this juncture insists upon three points:—(1) We know that the appearance of uniformity and regularity is compatible with the

<sup>1</sup> On the features common to Nature and History, cf. *Les Lois de l'Imitation*, by the late G. Tarde, 3<sup>me</sup> edn, 1900, ch. 1.

spontaneity of living agents: (2) the uniformity and order which the physicist ascertains avowedly pertain to matter as phenomenal, i.e. as appearance—to the *materia secunda*, which Leibniz referred to confused perception; (3) some adequate ground for this appearance there must be. It is reasonable to assume, the pluralist then concludes, that this ground is analogous to that which we know to underlie the law and order of the historical world. Regarding this last point we ought to notice, in passing, that a two-fold interpretation is possible, the pluralist's is one possibility, the theist may prefer another. The mutual relation and the possible conciliation of these two views is a problem that still lies before us. Just now it is only important to observe that 'the theistic hypothesis' affords *prima facie* a more satisfactory explanation of Nature's laws—which, Laplace notwithstanding, are not self-explanatory—than pluralism at first sight seems to do. For we should expect the acts of a Supreme Being to show a more exact uniformity than the conjoint results of the actions of myriads of lowly monads severally and half unconsciously striving after mutual adjustment. We here come upon an aspect of pluralism, which—though referred to in the foregoing exposition—it will be well to consider in more detail and apart.

Purposive action, it is commonly held, presupposes an established order, a reign of law, presupposes in fact that exact uniformity which naturalism formulates in mechanical terms. This is the physical basis which is supposed to furnish teleology with its indispensable *ποῦ στῶ*. But pluralism attempts to get behind all this. No doubt a man deliberating how to compass

some definite end, on which he has decided, may think out a chain of practical syllogisms in the way long ago described by Aristotle; beginning with the last term in the causal series he works backwards till he reaches the first, some act that is which he is in a position immediately to perform<sup>1</sup>. But the practical syllogism, 'acting on principle' as we say, is an ideal; we do not always act—above all, we do not begin acting—in this fashion. The earliest activity is apparently altogether impulsive, determined not by desire for future satisfaction but by aversion to a present ill. The stimulus of pain, as a veritable goad, leads to random efforts for relief. And relief, if it comes at all, may come in either of two ways. The situation may itself change for the better, or at length a fitting attitude or movement may be hit upon. In the former case the result might be attributed to pure chance: if the situation should recur the sufferer will be practically as ignorant and as helpless as before. But in reality all changes in the environment will be the result of conative impulses somewhere; and from such of these as succeed, the agents, if we credit them with any retentiveness, learn something. A successful adjustment concurring with the release from pain will be specially impressive. In this way the evil and the remedy will be so far associated that on each repetition of the former the many tentative movements will become less, and the one effective movement more, pronounced, till at length it becomes an immediate, habitual, and eventually even a mechanical response.

But this gradual development of purposive activity

<sup>1</sup> *Neomachean Ethics*, III. iii.

is mere psychological detail, upon which it is not necessary to enlarge here<sup>1</sup>. True, it will be said, but all such development presupposes 'the orderliness of things,' and pluralism, we understand, undertakes to explain how this orderliness has itself been developed. Order is heaven's first law, we say, but pluralism essays to get back of all this and to start from chaos, where we can count on no repetitions and therefore on no progress. This is unquestionably a formidable objection, and what we shall have in the next lecture to consider is how the pluralists may attempt to meet it.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the article, 'Psychology,' *Ency. Brit.* 11th edn.

## LECTURE IV.

### THE CONTINGENCY IN THE WORLD.

We left Pluralism charged with the hopeless attempt of bringing order out of chaos. But the notion of chaos is after all altogether a myth: as much a bugbear as a chimaera. "No one," says Lotze, "who means to think clearly can form any idea of the existence of such an infinite agglomeration of countless possibilities.... [Such an] abyss of indefiniteness is unthinkable, and any attempt to set distinctly before ourselves the origin of natural forms must start from some definite primitive state, which—because it was this and no other—from the very first excluded from actuality much in itself possible, while of much else on the other hand it contained not merely the bare possibility but a more or less immediate and urgent positive ground for its realisation<sup>1</sup>." It is precisely such a definite primitive state that pluralism postulates, a totality of unique individuals each bent on self-preservation. But self here, we must remember, implies, not as in atomistic pluralism, a simple, unchangeable element that *ex hypothesi* must be conserved, though it does nothing and suffers nothing. What is here implied is a true self, whose

<sup>1</sup> *Macrocosmus*, Bk iv. Ch. II., Eng. trans. Vol. I. p. 432.

feeling and action vary with, though they are not exclusively determined by, its situation relatively to the rest. Such a definite situation will, as Lotze points out, then and there exclude certain possibilities and lead on immediately to the realisation of others. The mechanical theory too must postulate a primitive collocation of atoms which its laws can never explain; but, these atoms being unalterable, the laws that formulate their successive changes of position are regarded as also determinate and fixed. The individuals of spiritualistic pluralism, on the other hand, are held to be plastic and capable of development; and the new relations that become established among them are therefore regarded as the direct consequences of such development. At the start then the order that is to be has still to become: everything is inchoate, but nothing chaotic, unless inexperience and innocence are the same as anarchy and original sin.

The pluralists, we must remember, take all their bearings from the historical standpoint and endeavour to work backwards from the facts of human personality and social intercourse. Their mode of thought is frankly, though not crudely, anthropomorphic: hence such titles as Personalism, Personal Idealism, Humanism and the like, which one or other has adopted. Now in this personal domain, whether individual or social, we find orderliness and regularity in plenty. From this orderliness and regularity we may derive premisses, at once general and definite, for practical syllogisms: it affords an ample basis of reliable means for the realisation of the most varied ends, and it makes education and further experience

always possible. But the whole of such development is the result of the conduct and behaviour, severally or collectively, of the persons concerned: none of it existed previously as the presupposition of such conduct. Other forms of order and regularity—we may call them lower forms—no doubt there were, but not these. Of such lower forms we may say that they were indispensable conditions of the higher forms that followed—indispensable conditions indeed, but not sufficient. The future is grounded on the past, it may be, but we cannot in history, as in science, infer the one from the other: we cannot anticipate the superstructure from a knowledge of the foundations, or prophesy whenever we can remember. Looking back then on the career of an individual or on the progress of a community we may distinguish, at any given point, on the one side the habits, tastes and dexterities already acquired or the customs, institutions and polity already established, and on the other the new and often unexpected development that followed upon these.

We may express the relation between the two by adopting—and adapting—the old scholastic distinction of *natura naturata* and *natura naturans*. What is done forecloses some old possibilities and opens up new ones: Vulcan, who had spent his youth at the forge, could hardly hope to charm Olympus with Apollo's lyre, though he made a suit of armour worthy of the god of war: the Senites worsted in their struggles with Rome could no longer aspire to the supremacy of the world; though, scattered everywhere and yet united, they still remain its masters in finance. What is done, *natura naturata*—the decisions made,

the habits formed, the customs fixed—constitutes at any stage the routine, the general trend of things, within which future possibilities lie. What is still to do, *natura naturans*, implies further spontaneity and growth; new decisions to be taken, fresh experiments to be made, with their usual sequel of trial and error and possible eventual success; happy thoughts or inspirations occurring to the individual; and the rise of great men inaugurating new epochs for their race or for the world. Even Bacon, who was certainly sufficiently impressed by the supremacy of law, we find saying: *Super datum corpus novam naturam, sive novas naturas generare et superinducere, opus et intentio est humanae potentiae*<sup>1</sup>. How little this generating of new natures is to be regarded as the inevitable consequence of the antecedent routine is shown by the myths which attributed the earliest arts to the intervention of gods and heroes, Triptolemus, Prometheus, Athene, Apollo.

If now we were to contemplate an individual's career or a nation's progress at a later stage the same distinction could still be made, only that the line dividing the lifeless routine from the 'increasing purpose' would be drawn at a new point. The painful efforts and strange experiences of the past are now replaced by such masterly facility and perfect familiarity as can serve as 'stepping-stones to higher things'; the reforms and liberties, so hardly achieved, are now

<sup>1</sup> *Novum Organum*, Vol. II. I. Kitchin's edn, p. 132. On this whole topic see the brilliant article, 'Great Men and their Environment,' by that thorough-going pluralist, W. James, *The Will to believe*, pp. 216 ff.



unquestioned, and so open up possibilities of 'nobler modes of life, with sweeter manners, purer laws.' If, on the other hand, we contemplate things at an earlier stage than that with which we began, the converse will hold. What we then found consolidated into habit or custom, as so much fixed routine, would still be fluent and so to say adolescent, alternatives then finally determined would still be pending; and much that later will be commonplace, still a marvel beyond the range of present surmise. Now this characteristic of the historical world the pluralist boldly generalises to the utmost. "All nature," to repeat a summary I have made elsewhere, "is regarded as plastic and evolving like mind: its routine and uniformity being explained on the analogy of habit and heredity in the individual, of custom and tradition in society; while its variety is attributed to spontaneity in some form<sup>1</sup>." "The one intelligible theory of the universe," a prominent pluralist tells us, "is that of objective [i.e., I take it, personal] idealism, that matter is effete mind, inveterate habits becoming physical laws<sup>2</sup>." Evidence of such mechanization—that is, of what originally was spontaneous and tentative becoming eventually automatic and regular—is forthcoming up to the very verge of our knowledge of whatever can be regarded as individual and unique at all. But though individuals other than conceptual ones are beyond the physicist's ken, evidence has long been accumulating even here

<sup>1</sup> 'Mechanism and Morals.' Adamson Lecture, *Hibbert Journal*, 1905, p. 92.

<sup>2</sup> C. S. Peirce, 'The Architectonic of Theories,' *Monist*, Vol. 1. 1890, p. 170.

to strengthen the analogy between inorganic and organic evolution regarded *en bloc*<sup>1</sup>.

It will be helpful at this point to recall a distinction too often ignored or confused in current expositions of causation—the distinction between efficient cause and occasional cause. The former leads us to say: Every event has a cause, an efficient cause, the latter finds its meaning in the generalisation: The same (occasional) cause is followed invariably by the same effect. Here in fact the notion of cause is transformed into that of law, for it is only on the ground of such regular recurrence that causal connexion is affirmed. Causal efficiency on the other hand is at once assured for us on a single occurrence, if that be our own act; and though the occasion recur never so often, the act need never be repeated. With inanimate objects the occasion inevitably determines the result: this is the meaning of law. Hence, as Kant in substance put it, life is the death of all natural philosophy, for “life means the capacity to act or change according to an internal principle,” means, that is to say, the presence of an efficient cause<sup>2</sup>. Now “chance,” we are told, “is opposed to law in this sense, viz. that what happens according to law may be predicted and counted on<sup>3</sup>”: in the same sense the conduct of living beings, i.e. historical events, are opposed to law. Thus what one person might regard as due to chance may be really due to the act of another.

According to the pluralistic *Weltanschauung* then there are no laws antecedent to the active individuals.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. e.g. Sir Norman Lockyer's *Inorganic Evolution*, 1900, Bk v.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Naturalism and Agnosticism*, 3rd edn, Vol. I. p. 177.

<sup>3</sup> Fleming, *Vocabulary of Philosophy*.

who compose the world, no laws determining *them*, unless we call their own nature a law; and then indeed the world would start with as many laws as there are individuals<sup>1</sup>. Such a view of course involves throughout an element of contingency such as we find in all personal affairs<sup>2</sup>. Some pluralists, very ill-advisedly as I think, have identified this element with pure chance and even proposed to elevate it to the place of a guiding principle under the title of 'tychism,'—*τύχη κυβερνᾷ πάντα*. But every act of a conative agent is determined by—what may, in a wide sense, be called—a motive, and motivation is incompatible with chance, though in the concrete it be not reducible to law.

Possibly the objection will still be pressed that if, as all psychology teaches, the recurrence of like situations is essential to any advance in experience, it is difficult to see how without a previously established 'reign of law' experience could ever begin. In point of fact, even as things are now, with all the so-called laws of nature in full force, unless the range of an experient's distinguishable percepts and interests were restricted there could be no possibility of its advance in experience. We must postulate what I have called subjective selection, in other words we must assume that many of the changes that take place around it are for a given subject severally imperceptible and that to many that are perceptible it is entirely indifferent. Without such restriction the progress of science itself would be impossible. Thus, so far as our observations and means of measurement are concerned, the solar

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Lotze, *Metaphysic*, § 32.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Supplementary Note I.

system is an isolated system: actually of course its motions are affected by those of all other stellar systems. But if the early astronomers had had to take these into account the complexity would have been beyond human powers to unravel. As it is, it has been remarked that if all the perturbations of the planets now known had been known to Kepler he could never have discovered the form of their orbits: as it was the problem proved one of colossal proportions and occupied him during ten years.

But from the pluralist standpoint the term imperceptible is not accurate: the whole universe is perceived by every percipient. But such perception may be confused, as Leibniz used to say, or undifferentiated to an indefinite extent. The presence of this indefinite background of confused or undifferentiated objects, though it is not attended to and determines no special response, is still of vital importance: for example, we do not feel the pressure of the atmosphere, yet its absence would be fatal. The development of experience however depends entirely on differentiated presentations and these in turn are commensurate to the position already attained. The shoeblack stationed by the Royal Exchange will welcome a muddy day, but is unperturbed by the fluctuations of the market; the *amoeba*, confined to a drop of stagnant water, has only to do with the tiny fragments that float within it, and need not bewilder itself about the weather forecast. So too the atom, if it be real at all, that is, anything for itself, has only to mind its partners in the dance and avoid collisions: as far as it is concerned, the continuity of things reduces all beyond its infinitesimally narrow field to a permanent background for it

devoid of change : mechanically expressed, all its action is so-called contact action.

To resume then, the purposive act or deliberate intention of one agent may for the experience of a second be a mere happening or accident. It may befall contrary to all that the latter regarded as possible and independently of all his aims ; but it still remains the outcome of another's purpose, is neither causeless nor aimless. Though contingent to others it was not in itself a case either of chance or necessity<sup>1</sup>. But as bearing on the objection that we have been considering, there are two or three characteristics of a pluralistic world, a world partly fixed and partly fluent, partly *naturata*, partly *naturans*, which it may be well to emphasize as consequences of the contingency that such a world entails.

First, since for pluralism there are no natural laws so to say 'in force' from the beginning, but on the contrary all natural laws are evolved, there will be no rigorous and mechanical concatenation of things such as naturalism is wont to assume : the fixity, so far as it is real, will embody the result of experience ; so far as it is apparent, it will be due, as we have seen, to the statistical constancy of large numbers. But, again, in a world consisting of finite individuals no single individual and no community of such can foresee all the consequences of what they do : over and above what was intended much will result that was not intended. While chipping his flint instruments or polishing his weapons of wood the savage, it is supposed, may incidentally have generated the sparks or heat which he sooner or later turned to account for the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Lectt. XIII. and XIV.

production of fire. When certain Phoenician sailors kindled a fire on the seashore, their sole purpose was to cook their food, but among the dead embers they presently discovered a mass of molten glass produced by the fusion of the potashes and the sand; and so a useful art arose. When primitive men scratched rude pictures on mammoth tusks they did not foresee the passage of pictures into hieroglyphs or ideograms and of these into phonograms or an alphabet. Again, no one deliberately excogitated such institutions as human language, courts of justice or constitutional government. Each step in the progress made realised some unexpected advantage and made a new step possible; but the progress as a whole involved no such practical syllogism as the old theories of convention and contract naively assumed. The literal meaning of such words as 'discovery' and 'invention' bears unmistakeable testimony to the truth of this. Such 'heterogony of ends,' as Wundt has called it<sup>1</sup>, the objective realisation of adaptations that were never subjectively intended, must have played a yet more conspicuous part in the earliest phases of evolution. As the result of what are aptly called blind impulses, whether due to positive pain or to mere restlessness, the successful individual or race gradually raises itself in the scale of life, shows a 'tendency to progression,' function perfecting structure, though the end attained may never be foreseen. As I have said elsewhere and anticipating Wundt: "The tendency at any one moment is simply

<sup>1</sup> *System der Philosophie*, 1889, S. 337. But the whole idea is clearly formulated by Hegel: cf. his *Philosophie der Geschichte*, 1837, S. 30.

towards more life, simply growth; but this process of self-preservation imperceptibly but steadily modifies the self that is preserved. The creature is bent only on filling its skin; but in doing this as pleasantly as may be, it gets a better skin to fill, and accordingly seeks to fill it differently. All that is required is that to advance to a higher level of life shall on the whole be more pleasurable or less painful than to remain behind. Now this condition seems provided, without any need for a clear prevision of ends or any feeling after improvement or perfection as such, simply by the waning of familiar pleasures and by the zest of novelty<sup>1</sup>.

Since, as I have said, the pluralistic view of the world necessarily involves an element of contingency in its very idea of a finite Many mutually striving for the best *modus vivendi*, it must be allowed that the actual presence—*prima facie* at least—of such contingency in the world of our experience is so far an argument for the pluralist's position: absolutism leaves no place for this contingency. Some amplification of this point seems then to be relevant and in order. In the first place an instructive analogy may be drawn between the diversity in tools, weapons, and processes,

<sup>1</sup> *Ency. Brit.* s.v. 'Psychology,' 1886, 11th edn, p. 585. However the Lamarckians and Darwinians may settle their differences, it is agreed on all hands that there are at any rate no really fortuitous variations or mutations. The pluralist, of course, is positive that the ultimate explanation is to be found only in the conative impulses of sentient individuals. It is worth noting by the way that even Weismann at length so far agrees with this as to admit that "the direction of the variation of a part must be determined by its utility," cf. his article, 'Germinal Selection,' *Monist*, 1896, p. 267.

which different races of primitive men have devised for the same purpose, and the diversity in the natural adaptations, instincts or contrivances by which in different animals or plants the same functions are discharged. Thus among men centrifugal force is turned to account by some races who make slings, while others avail themselves of it in their use of the bolas or the lasso. Some shoot with bows, others with blow-guns, while yet others mainly use javelins, throwing-sticks or boomerangs. Canoes are made in various parts of the world from hollowed tree-trunks, from twigs and bark, from skins stretched over whale-bone, from a wooden framework covered with matting or with reeds, and in yet other ways. Exhilarating drinks are obtained in some cases by fermenting fruits—grapes, apples, dates—in others by fermenting grains, such as wheat, barley, rice; or again by fermenting honey or milk. And doubtless in the great majority of these instances the discovery or invention was the result of a combination of happy accident and happy thought rather than of deliberate design and forethought. But what we have specially to observe is the *identity* of the need and the *diversity* of the materials which in different cases are turned to account to meet it. The collocation of the two can only be regarded as contingent.

And the like holds good in numberless instances in the animal and vegetable kingdoms. Thus the bird owes its power of flight to those enormously developed scales with frayed edges, which we call feathers, that are attached to its hands and fore-arm. In the bat this apparatus is replaced by a stretched membrane



extending between vastly elongated fingers\* and fringing the sides of its body. In insects again the so-called wings are only *physiologically* limbs: morphologically they are but flattened folds of the integument, so to say extemporized wings. In the courting season some animals attract one another by sounds that are variously produced in different species—by voice, as with frogs and song-birds, by stridulation, as with crickets and the cicada, or by tapping on foreign substances, as with certain wood-peckers and the death-watch; some attract by their brilliant coloration, as in certain apes and the peacock, or by phosphorescence, as with the glow-worm; and others by the production of peculiar odours, as with the musk-rat and deer. Some escape their enemies by the celerity of their movements, others by death-like stillness; some by conspicuous coloration and a nauseous taste, others by sombre hues resembling their inanimate surroundings; some by fetid exhalations, others by spines or a hard encasement. Plants in some cases trust to the wind—as we aptly say—to disseminate their seeds, which are provided with vanes or fluffy plumes, or are of dust-like minuteness; the seeds of others attach themselves by hooks or grapnels to the fur of passing quadrupeds; while those of others are violently projected by variously contrived springs. Some again pass through animals who have eaten their pulpy envelopes, while others encased in a hard shell float away on the water<sup>1</sup>.

To suppose that all this variety should have been directly created for variety's sake, 'almost like toys

<sup>1</sup> These and abundant like instances will be found more fully described by Darwin, *Origin of Species*, Ch. vi. *et passim*.

in a shop,' to use Darwin's phrase, is indeed, as he urges, an 'incredible view,' as incredible as the view would be that the similar variety we find in human contrivances was itself supernaturally preordained instead of being the contingent result of differently situated individuals having to work with different materials to arrive at the same end. To make this analogy clear it may suffice to consider the instance just now mentioned, that of flight. The feathers of the bird are homologous to, i.e. genetically connected with, the lizard's scales: the subsequent modification of those attached to the wings and tail so as to subserve flight has no connexion with the original function of feathers as a dermal covering, which remains their sole function for the most part. It is just to the coincidence of their special plasticity with the new conditions of nascent bird life that their development is to be attributed. Bats are scientifically called *Cheiroptera* or hand-winged, but the fore limb in the adjacent order, the *Insectivora*, is primarily adapted to running or climbing, and again is modified in the moles, in a direction the precise opposite to that of flight, viz. burrowing. But the family of the *Insectivora* nearest akin to the bats, consisting of the single genus, *Galeopithecus*, and some of the rodents, the order next adjacent, "are assisted in jumping by a kind of parachute, which consists of a cutaneous expansion, the *patagium*, stretched between the limbs on each side<sup>1</sup>." The bat's flight is but a development of this habit. To secure this result the one means available was the elongation of the fingers of the hand as a frame-

<sup>1</sup> Sedgwick, *A Student's Text-book of Zoology*, Vol. II. p. 642.

work for the greatly extended *patagium* or elastic membrane, the original function of the hand being sacrificed almost entirely. The origin of the insect's wings is, I understand, still something of a problem. Professor J. A. Thomson writes about them:—"It seems plausible to compare them to the tracheal outgrowths seen in some aquatic larvae, and to regard them as primarily respiratory, and secondarily locomotor. One may venture to suggest that the additional respiratory efficiency derived from such outgrowths would increase the total activity of the insect, and more or less directly lift it into the air<sup>1</sup>." And so, *mutatis mutandis*, other instances of biological development may be explained.

"It certainly is true," as Darwin has said, "that new organs appearing as if created for some special purpose, rarely or never appear in any being<sup>2</sup>." Imagine that a clock had been the first machine invented by men and that all other machines had to be modelled on this type. As it is, mechanisms for very different purposes *are* formed on this type, and human efforts, if necessarily restricted to it, would doubtless in time gradually devise many more by means of modifications analogous to those which Nature displays in adapting a given type of structure to very various conditions of life. Or again if we imagine that instead of a clock some other machine, say a loom, had been that from which the start was made, all subsequent machines being modelled on that. Many varieties of this form of mechanism too already exist, and it is not too much to assume that if necessary it could be indefinitely

<sup>1</sup> *Chambers's Encyclopaedia*, Vol. vi. p. 167.

<sup>2</sup> *Origin of Species*, 6th edn, p. 156.

varied. Such is in fact the picture that the organic world presents to us. As Darwin puts it: "All organic beings have been formed on two great laws—Unity of Type, and the Conditions of Life. By unity of type is meant that fundamental agreement in structure which we see in organic beings of the same class, and which is quite independent of their habits of life<sup>1</sup>." Let us consider for a moment two such types—say the arthropod and the vertebrate. Widely as these two types differ we find some species of each adapted to every condition of life in every variety of climate and locality, mountain heights or subterranean caves, the surface of the earth or the depths of the sea. We find creatures of each type flying, swimming, diving, or burrowing, active by night or by day, some sociable, some solitary, some preying upon specific living animals, others feeding more or less indiscriminately on the corpses of the dead; or vegetable feeders, some confined to specific plants, others to particular parts or tissues, and so on; for an exhaustive specification of the conditions of life to which these two types are alike adapted is impossible. Even when we take one of the leading modifications of each type—insects and birds, for example—the range of conditions is but slightly restricted.

A collateral consequence of this adaptation of a fixed type to various conditions of life is perhaps worth notice in passing. I refer to the awkward and grotesque, even the ludicrous and hideous forms of some plants and animals. The graceful shape and agile movements of the horse, the gazelle, the squirrel,

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 166

for instance, have been universally admired. Compared with them such creatures as the camel, the sloth and the wart-hog have been reckoned among Nature's abortions. But among less familiar animals there are many more ungainly or ill-favoured than these, as such scientific names as *Diabolus ursinus*, *Moioch horridus*, *Chimaera monstrosa*, suggest. These seeming anomalies did not escape the notice of the earlier naturalists. Buffon, for example, after the manner of Leibniz, imagines Nature setting before herself all possible forms and selecting first of all the most beautiful and harmonious, but "into the midst of this magnificent spectacle," he tells us, "some unfinished (*négligées*) products and some less happy forms, thrown like the shadows in a picture, appear to be the remnants of those ill-assorted designs and those disparate compositions which she has only allowed to remain in order to give us a more extended idea of her projects<sup>1</sup>." Theologians too have been exercised by these blemishes which seem everywhere to obtrude themselves, marring the beauty and detracting from the perfection of Nature. After an enumeration of a whole string of these 'veritably hellish shapes,' as they have been called—toadstools, thorn-apples, scorpions, rattlesnakes, &c. &c.—it has been asked:—"Can such an appalling, Callottesque fancy be attributed to God: can he be held capable of creating the ugly?" The true cause of such

<sup>1</sup> *Histoire naturelle; Des Oiseaux*, t. VIII. 1781, à propos of the Stilt (*Himantopus candidus*).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Rosenkranz, 'Die Verklarung der Natur,' B. Bauer's *Zeitsch. f. spekulative Theologie*, II. 1837, p. 262.

deformities certain theologians have preferred to find in man's alienation from God and the consequent reaction upon nature, of which he was the crown and keystone, that his fall entailed. Whatever may be thought of their explanation of the fact of Nature's aesthetic defects, the recognition of the fact itself by such thinkers is noteworthy.

But the contingency in the world presents itself in a still more striking light when we follow out the consequences of the pluralist theory of the world. According to that, as we have seen, the world consists solely of finite individuals primarily dominated by private ends and for whom self-preservation is the first law of life. Each species develops for itself and never directly either for the advantage or the detriment of others; though such incidental consequences to one species may arise continually from the development of another, as we have already seen. In fact, evolution in large measure consists in adaptations to meet these consequences, so as to avoid or counteract as far as possible those that are harmful and as far as possible to avail of, or cooperate with, the rest. But such processes in the main and for long—so long, that is, as they are natural processes—are purely egoistic, not altruistic. Moreover the apostolic saying, God is no respecter of persons, turns out to be true of Nature in a way which seems entirely to disprove the cardinal maxim of the old natural theology that all the lower creatures exist for the sake of man. Man is undoubtedly 'the paragon of animals,' the highest link in a vast chain, but it is a chain in which one and the same right to live belongs to all. I recall a revolting

sight that I saw in my youth, which rudely shocked my preconceived notions of the fitness of things. That man should slay and eat creatures lower in the scale than himself, that the song-thrush should feed on worms and snails or the gorgeously tinted kingfisher dart into the thick of a shoal of silly minnows to secure food for himself and his brood—all this seemed reasonable enough; for here the lower subserved the higher. But once I chanced to see three young rabbits playfully gambolling, heedless of a cold clammy snake who stealthily glided forward, and struck first one and then another till after a few momentary convulsions all lay stretched and dead; whereupon the sluggish reptile, without the faintest show of emotion, pleasurable or otherwise, proceeded slowly to suck down one after another these pets of my childhood—then indeed I felt that the world so far was neither well nor wisely nor beautifully ordered. Such an incident, however individually impressive, is, of course, utterly trivial compared with the terrible ravages, formerly regarded as the scourges of an offended deity, which we now know are wrought by the lowest forms of life with which we have any exact acquaintance, whereby not only our flocks and fields are continually devastated but millions of our fellow-men are painfully swept away. It is not however the physical evil, the dysteleology of all this that is now in point, but simply the fact that there is no necessary connexion between worth of life as we estimate it and fitness to survive in the evolutionist sense. In the physical struggle for existence worth does not count: distinguished men like Raphael, Howard, Keats and Hegel succumbed to microscopic

bacilli, and it is conceivable that the whole human race might thus ignobly disappear. Such anomalies seem even *a priori* to be an obvious, almost an inevitable outcome of pluralism, and though perhaps not insuperable, still as far as they go, they are an argument in favour of the pluralist's and a difficulty for the theist's position.

But further the contingency in the world in general seems to involve that the existence of mankind at all is itself but a special contingency. In the case of other living kinds few persons would hesitate to admit this. According to the psalmist indeed God "causeth the grass to grow for the cattle...the high mountains are for the wild goats, the rocks are a refuge for the conies." But what is at all events immediately evident is rather the pluralist position, that these creatures are adapted to their conditions of life, not their conditions of life to them. The existence of grass does not depend on that of the cattle or goats or conies that browse upon it<sup>1</sup>, but contrariwise these creatures are variously modified to derive their sustenance from the grass, according as it is found on plains, on crags or in hollows. Similarly it is argued that trees came into existence and continue to exist independently of the birds that there make their nests or of the various other creatures that live among their branches. So had there been no forests there could have been no apes, but the existence of forests is due primarily to the conditions of vegetable life and not to the needs of animals. Assuming man's simian ancestry—and assuredly, as Darwin has said, "if man had not been

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Lect. III. p. 62.



his own classifier, he would never have thought of founding a separate order for his own reception"—then the mode of life of those climbing, chattering, inquisitive denizens of the woods gradually led up to his wonderful hand and erect posture, his power of speech and capacity for knowledge. First the presence of trees made the *Quadrumana* or four-handed primates possible, and then the advance of the higher forms among these beyond the confines of the forest ushered in the two-handed primates or *Bimana* with their bipedal mode of progression. Some fragments of one of the latest of the 'missing links' in this chain were said to have been discovered about ten years ago among some volcanic ash in the island of Java, the so-called *Pithecanthropus erectus*, and Professor Haeckel had previously thought it becoming to entertain his scientific readers with a fanciful picture of the family group under the title *Pithecanthropus alalus*.

No doubt it is the psychological gulf rather than any biological gap between the speechless man-apes and *Homo sapiens* that is most impressive: it is not the physical difference but the mental difference that is so profound. This glaring psychological discontinuity between man and brute, as we know them, has led thinkers of every age and school to regard the origin of mankind and even of every individual man as something more or less supernatural, not wholly explicable by the ordinary processes that suffice to explain the nature and development of the lower animals. In the Mosaic account of creation, "God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness": here this difference is distinctly recognised.

It was this difference again that led Aristotle to regard the rational principle common to all men as not conjoined like sense and phantasy with bodily organs, not naturally generated like these, but as wholly separable from the body and divinely infused from without after the commencement of the bodily life. It was this difference that checked Descartes too from applying to man his famous automaton theory, which seemed to him adequate to explain the behaviour of brutes: in man alone he was constrained to allow that a soul is united with the animal machine. Even Leibniz, regardless of his cardinal principle of continuity, was driven to admit a difference in kind between the souls of animals and the spirits of men, a difference so great that he compares the relation of God to the animals with that of an inventor to his machine, but God's relation to men he compares to that of a prince to his subjects or a father to his children. At the moment of birth he supposed that God gave reason to each soul "by a special act or by a kind of transcreation<sup>1</sup>." Finally—to take one more example specially interesting in connexion with our present topic—we have Mr Wallace, whose name is so honourably associated with Darwin's, firmly maintaining that the theory of natural selection, which they independently promulgated, is insufficient to account for the development of man. As the existence of the poodle or the pouter pigeon is due to man's interference with the working of natural selection so, Mr Wallace assumes, the existence of man is to be attributed to a similar inter-

<sup>1</sup> *Théodicée*, § 91.

ference of some superior or supreme intelligence. In short, as one of his ablest critics concisely puts it, Mr Wallace's view amounts to saying that "our brains are made by God and our lungs by natural selection" and that, in point of fact, "man is God's domestic animal<sup>1</sup>." Still this is something of a parody, and it cannot be denied that Mr Wallace's hypothesis is a perfectly legitimate one. But is it necessary?

In common with the other supernatural explanations of man as rational animal, that of Mr Wallace recognises the presence of the two factors which rationality and animality imply; but all alike entirely refrain from inquiring whether sociology may not account for the one at least as completely as biology accounts for the other. Reason is not correlated to an organ in the way that sight and locomotion are: so far Aristotle was right; it comes from without and is not generated. Had the most transcendent genius been left to grow up wild in the woods he would certainly never have attained to reason. On the other hand no biologist would pretend to find in difference of organization the equivalent of the vast interval between the genius and the savage. The difference then between *Homo alalus* and *Homo sapiens* is not a biological difference: in short for biology there is no such species as *Homo sapiens*. This is now generally allowed. But then so far there is no case against the contingency of man's origin biologically considered: not his lungs only but his brain also or rather his entire frame may be regarded as equally the outcome of a pluralistic evolution.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Wallace, *Natural Selection*, 1891, p. 205 n.

Let us now consider the sociological side. Cut off from society entirely the individual, we have seen, never attains to sapience at all; also the more advanced the social medium in which he lives the more advanced on the average his intelligence and humanity. Society of course presupposes language as the instrument of communicating and accumulating knowledge: without it a tribe of men would be no better than a pack of wolves or a herd of deer. But there are few nowadays who imagine that speech was directly imparted to our first parents by some supernatural instructor just as it was afterwards taught by them to their children. Though we have no precise knowledge concerning its original acquisition we know enough to be satisfied that it developed gradually out of cries and gestures. For curiosity, imitativeness and excitability even the existing primates exceed all other animals except man. As regards the sociological side of man's origin then—the advance from animality to rational personality through inter-subjective intercourse—there is, it must be confessed, *prima facie*, neither any definite evidence of, nor any absolute need for, supernatural interference. The progress of knowledge and co-operation shows, so long as we can trace it, the same contingency, the same 'heterogony of ends' that characterize biological development.

But if the existence of particular species, mankind included, can be regarded as *prima facie* contingent, still more obviously will contingency pertain to the existence of particular individuals, the great men who have often seemed to direct the course of human history also included. There is no need for detailed

illustration here, but it is worth notice that this contingency is threefold; in respect, viz. of the individual's parentage, his nativity, and his survival to maturity. Those who breed and rear our domestic plants and animals take special pains to direct and control these circumstances, replacing nature's contingency by ideals of their own; and daring innovators like Plato and the late Sir Francis Galton have even proposed to apply the same 'eugenic' methods to the human race. Of "Eugenics," Galton recently said that it "dealt with what was more valuable than money or lands, namely, with natural inheritance of high character, capable brains, fine physique and vigour...It aimed at the evolution and preservation of high races and it well deserved to be strictly enforced<sup>1</sup>." Compared with those practices and this possibility it would, I believe, be hard to think of anything that sets the seeming contingency in the world in a more striking light. But history suggests endless similar reflexions, all trite enough to be sure yet none the less true. Had Letitia Ramolino not been so beautiful, some one has said, there would have been no Napoleon Bonaparte. The infant Isaac Newton, puny and prematurely born, was not expected to live many hours; how many potential geniuses, it may be asked, succumbed to the untimely death that he barely escaped?

But as regards the physical world at all events it was long supposed that a pre-established harmony, a complete unitary system could be safely assumed. Long after the Ptolemaic astronomy—with its primum mobile, its crystalline spheres, its firmament of stars,

<sup>1</sup> *Nature*, Vol. LXXI. p. 401.

the several planets with the sun and moon all revolving in concentric circles round the earth—had given place to that of Copernicus, it was still believed that there was somewhere a great central sun round which the entire stellar universe revolved. But this notion too has been exploded. "So far as we can judge at present," writes Professor Young, "it is most likely that the stars are moving, not in regular closed orbits around any centre whatever, but rather as bees do in a swarm, each for itself, under the action of the predominant attraction of its nearest neighbours. The *solar* system is an absolute monarchy with the sun supreme. The great stellar system appears to be a republic, without any such central, unique, and dominant authority. Here perturbation prevails over regularity, and 'individualism' is the method of the greater system of stars, as solar despotism is that of the smaller system of planets<sup>1</sup>."

Turning from stars to atoms we find a similar change of view. The five regular solids of Plato's cosmogony, the hard, massy corpuscles of Lucretius and Newton, the 'manufactured articles,' severally identical, ingenerable, and immutable, of Herschel and Maxwell, are all disappearing to make room for a theory of chemical evolution, which recognises degrees of simplicity and stability but finds no forms absolutely elementary or absolutely permanent. The results of spectroscopic investigations conjoined with the recently discovered phenomena of radio-activity are, as Sir Norman Lockyer says, "on all-fours with the geological record...We

<sup>1</sup> C. A. Young, *A Text-book of General Astronomy*, 1893, pp. 461,

note the same changes of form, sudden breaks in forms, disappearances of old, accompanied by appearances of new forms; and with these we have to associate ...a growth of complexity...that is to say, the existence of our chemical elements as we know them does not depend upon their having been separately manufactured ...they are the result of the working of a general law, as in the case of plants and animals<sup>1</sup>."

<sup>1</sup> *Inorganic Evolution*, 1900, pp. 164, 166.

## LECTURE V.

### EVOLUTION AS EPIGENESIS AND EQUILIBRATION

In spite of the contingency which pluralism leads us to expect, and which, in fact, we have found everywhere to characterize the world, there is at any rate one principle that from the pluralistic standpoint may be regarded as *a priori*. As a necessary consequence of the interaction of a plurality of individuals, intent on self-betterment as well as self-conservation, there should be a general tendency to diminish the mere contingency of the world and to replace it by a definite progression. And this, so far as our experience goes, we find to be in fact the case. Such progression we are wont now adays to speak of as evolution.

But widely as the term 'evolution' is used, it is rarely defined; hence it is often without misgiving applied to processes that are diametrically opposed, to the differentiation of a unity and to the integration of a plurality. The history of this term is worth a moment's consideration. We begin with the literal sense, the unrolling of a scroll or volume, whereby what lies written inside it is no longer latent but laid bare—becomes patent and evident. This as a figure is then transferred to the processes of thought; and we talk of evolving or explicating whatever may be implied or involved in a concept, an argument or a theory. We find it later applied with a similar



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meaning to the supposed unfolding of an organism regarded as completely pre-existing in miniature within the germ. Such was the theory of biological evolution or preformation advocated by Leibniz. And throughout the 18th century this was the prevalent view among biologists and philosophers alike; but now it is all but superseded by the very different theory of epigenesis or new formation; for which nevertheless the term evolution is still retained. So different are the two theories in fact, that the earlier, strictly evolutionary view would—unless essentially modified—render the Darwinian doctrine of the origin of species impossible. For according to that earlier theory “the germ was more than a marvellous bud-like miniature of the adult, it necessarily included in its turn the next generation, and this the next—in short all future generations. Germ within germ, in ever smaller miniature, after the fashion of an infinite juggler’s box, was the corollary logically appended to this theory of preformation<sup>1</sup>.” The successive unfolding of such a system of *emboîtement* or involution, though the *ne plus ultra* of evolution literally understood, is then the direct negative of evolution as we understand it to-day. According to this later theory each new organism is not an ‘educt’ but a ‘product,’ to use Kantian phrases: its *parts* are in no sense present in the embryo but are gradually organized, one after another in due order, as the term epigenesis implies and as Harvey, who first used the term, prophetically maintained.—It is now known too that in this progressive integration the individual retraces the main stages through which the

<sup>1</sup> Geddes and Thomson, *The Evolution of Sex*, p. 84.

species has advanced: as Haeckel in technical language concisely puts it: Ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny.

Such a theory of evolution is in all respects conformable to the pluralistic standpoint. The diverging lines of phylogenetic ascent indicate the various directions by which different species have extended and improved their adjustment to the environment: here all is history, the result of effort, trial and error, here we have adventure and ultimate achievement; in a word *natura naturans*, as I said before. The successive stages of ontogenetic development, on the other hand, though each step is an advance for the individual and justifies Harvey's term epigenesis; yet from the point of view of the species it is mainly recapitulation, *palingenesis* as Haeckel has called it: here then we have on the whole only routine, heredity as the result of organic memory or habit, in other words, as *natura naturata*. The preformation theory on the other hand is only compatible with a singularistic, or as Professor James has called it, a block universe, in which

With earth's first clay they did the last man knead  
And then of the last harvest sowed the seed:  
On the first morning of creation wrote  
What the last dawn of reckoning shall read

Though this theory seems, so far as biology is concerned, to have originated in a certain faulty observation of Malpighi<sup>1</sup>, the anatomist, it probably owed its long supremacy in large measure to the advocacy of philosophers, Regis, Malebranche, and especially Leibniz. For Leibniz indeed it was but a corollary of his

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Huxley's article 'Evolution,' *Ency. Brit.* 11th edn, Vol. x. p. 29 d.

doctrine of pre-established harmony, that hopeless theological pendant of his pluralism<sup>1</sup>. Such a theory of evolution is only appropriate to a singularistic philosophy, I have said ; but also it is the only theory of evolution which truly deserves the name. For evolution, strictly taken, presupposes a fundamental unity, in which all that is eventually evolved or disclosed was involved or contained from the first. Logic furnishes us with the clearest instance of evolution in this sense, and it was to the unfolding or explication of logical content that, as already<sup>\*</sup> said, the metaphor of evolution was first applied. The following passage from Hegel's *Encyclopaedia* is in point here :—"The movement of the notion is development : by which that only is explicitly affirmed which is already of itself present." The development of an organism was for Hegel the counterpart of this logical development, and he commends the so-called 'box-within-box' hypothesis of Leibniz and Bonnet for "perceiving that in the process of development the notion keeps to itself, and only gives rise to alteration of form, without making any addition in point of content<sup>2</sup>." But it was not the individual organism regarded apart but rather the entire universe that appeared to Hegel—Hegel the logician, that is to say—as just the realisation of such

<sup>1</sup> *Considérations sur le Principe de Vie*, Erdmann's *Leibniz Opera*, pp. 429 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Encyclopaedia*, i. § 161. Cf. also the following :—"Die Weltgeschichte ist die Darstellung, wie der Geist zu dem Bewusstsein dessen kommt, was er an sich bedeutet ; und wie der Keim die ganze Natur des Baumes...in sich trägt, so enthalten auch schon die ersten Spuren des Geistes virtualiter die ganze Geschichte. *Phil. der Gesch.*, Einleitung, p. 21.

a dialectical evolution. It is an immanent and self-determining process of explication of the Absolute One, setting out from and returning into itself. Duly to contrast it with this sublime idea of evolution, the progress that pluralism implies requires a distinctive name. It will be better at least at the outset to call the latter a process of integration and equilibration—terms which, it will be remembered, hold a prominent place in the synthetic philosophy of Herbert Spencer. Which is the truer view it is impossible, of course, to decide while the issue between pluralism and absolutism is still itself undecided. Whether the whole is prior to the parts or not, depends on the nature of the case. If the whole be a wood, then to the charge that he cannot see the wood for the trees, the pluralist may retort that at any rate the trees make the wood, not the wood the trees. But if the whole be a tree, it may be true that he fails to see the trunk because of the branches, and yet it is from the trunk that all these spring. Anyhow it is the parts, the many, with which the pluralist starts; the question, whether or no there is an absolute whole prior to—at once the logical and the real ground of—all the parts, is for him not the first question but the last. What we have now to do then is to consider this progressive integration that the Many imply, and in particular to ascertain the possible limits of the process<sup>1</sup>.

• The whole is more than the sum of its parts—that is the cardinal characteristic of evolution as understood by the pluralist. A unity that is not more than its constituent elements is no real unity at all • it is only

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Lecture ix.

a formal or mathematical whole. All real synthesis entails new properties which its component factors in their previous isolation did not possess. This statement many will hesitate to accept; for a methodological distinction—that is, or was, commonly regarded as answering to a real difference in things—will, no doubt, occur to them: the distinction, I mean, between those concurring causes whose separate effects are said merely “to be compounded with one another,” as in mechanical actions, and those, such as in chemical actions, “where the separate effects cease entirely and are succeeded by phenomena altogether different,” by new and so-called ‘heteropathic’ effects. This distinction—which the pluralist principle seems plainly to ignore, or rather, tacitly to contradict—is, according to J. S. Mill, whose account of it I have just quoted, “one of the fundamental distinctions in nature.” Not merely so, but the former case, that of the ‘composition of causes,’ as Mill terms it, is, he holds, the general one; “the other”—perhaps the only one, certainly the chief according to pluralism—he declares “is always special and exceptional<sup>1</sup>.” So it will seem so long, but only so long, as we overlook the essentially abstract character of the mechanical doctrine of the ‘composition of forces.’ If the causes compounded are purely quantitative, of course there can be no qualitative ‘intermixture of effects.’ But let all that actually happens in the real cases abstractly exemplifying such quantitative homogeneity be taken into account and no one, I imagine, will deny that heterogeneity is also present. The motions that the astronomer describes, for example,

<sup>1</sup> *System of Logic*, bk III. ch. vi. § 2.

are far from being the only effects that the constitution of the solar system involves. Even if the various physical phenomena it displays should also eventually admit of mechanical description, such description would still remain abstract and general: it could never earmark the individuals concerned and follow their several histories.

Meanwhile it still remains an open question, as Mach has said<sup>1</sup>, whether the mechanical view of things instead of being the profoundest is not the shallowest of all. One thing at any rate is certain, a strictly mechanical theory of the world, since it necessarily implies complete reversibility, can never explain what we understand by progress and development. Mechanism can always, life and experience can never, be made to move backwards: for the one composition and resolution are altogether on a par, in that they entail no change of either mass or energy; for the other there is the vital difference of value between organization and disorganization, sense and nonsense. The so-called conservation of mass and energy might be regarded as symbolising the initial state of the pluralistic world and as symbolising too the mere permanence and abstract being of its many units. But it is notorious that these concepts are the result of ignoring those differences of quality which alone convert units into individuals. Without these we may have *Erhaltung* but not *Entfaltung*, as a German would say: we may have conservation and

<sup>1</sup> Cf. his excellent chapter on 'The relation of mechanics to the other sciences': *Die Mechanik in ihrer Entwicklung*, ch. v. Of this work there is an American translation.

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indefinite composition but not development and definite organization. In short, the concrete integration of experience is the diametrical opposite to the mechanical resultant of a composition of abstract units: it is a *creative* resultant or synthesis, to use Wundt's happy and striking phrase<sup>1</sup>. Evolution, then, for the pluralist is always synthesis, and all real synthesis is creative synthesis.

Of such synthesis experience furnishes instances at every turn. The timbre of a musical note is more than the sum of its constituent tones: a melody more than the sum of its separate notes. To an infant or a dog a picture may afford all the colour sensations that it does to us, but for lack of intellectual synthesis the picture is not a significant whole. We are ourselves only at this level when we first catch sight of an unexpected object which we momentarily fail to recognise, or when owing to lapse of attention we cease to 'take in the sense' or 'lose the thread' of what we hear or read. Again, to repeat an instance I have used elsewhere:—"A fish can feel, smell, taste, see, and even hear, but we cannot assume solely on that account that it has any percepts to which its five senses contribute, as they do to our percept, say, of an orange or a peppermint. Taking voluntary movements as the index of psychical life, it would seem that the fish's movements are instigated and guided by its senses not

<sup>1</sup> But to Lotze belongs the credit of first signalling the fact, to which Wundt has given the name; and even Lotze gets so far as to apply the term creation to this 'relating activity,' as he calls it. Cf. his *Metaphysik*, §§ 268, 271. It is, to say the least, surprising that Wundt nowhere refers to Lotze's unquestionable priority in this matter.

collectively but separately... To this inability to combine simple percepts into one complex of a single object or situation we may reasonably attribute the fish's lack of sagacity<sup>1</sup>." It is just this difference between apprehending the parts and comprehending the whole that distinguishes what we call intellect from mere sense. It was the failure to appreciate this difference that made the sensationalist doctrine *prima facie* plausible—*Nihil est in intellectu. quod non fuerit prius in sensu*; as it was the failure to find the intellectually new among the sensationally old, that eventually proved this doctrine to be unsound. Spatial and temporal perception are conspicuous examples of creative synthesis, the genesis of which sensationalists have failed to explain and 'nativists' to explain away. By this process at every stage 'objects of a higher order,' as they have been happily termed, are attained; and these in turn may serve as the constituents of a new synthesis. So advancing, experience continually gains at once in complexity and in unity.

The prime source of this synthesis the pluralist leaves where Kant eventually left it<sup>2</sup>—in the activity of the experiencing subjects; though it must be allowed that the pluralist extends the concepts of experience and activity far beyond the range of Kant's so-called 'synthetic unity of apperception.' The peculiarity of each individual's syntheses again is regarded as due primarily to what we call the individual's interest,

<sup>1</sup> *Ency. Brit.* 11th edn, art. 'Psychology,' p. 572.

<sup>2</sup> I say eventually, because in his Dissertation of 1770 Kant was nearer to the Absolutist position. Cf. Caird, *The Critical Philosophy of Kant*, 1. pp. 209 ff.



giving to this term also a more extended meaning than it commonly receives. In other and plainer words perhaps, there is progressive experience at all because there are active individuals, severally *sui generis*, each from its own standpoint bent on working out a *modus vivendi* with the rest. And here we may remark the one-sidedness of the current concept of biological evolution as consisting simply in adaptation *to* environment, or even in adaptation *by* environment. For pluralism the adaptation is not rigidly one-sided but more or less reciprocal, a *mutuum commercium*, to use Kant's phrase. The more experience advances, the more there is of adaptation *of* environment as well as of adaptation *to* environment.

The synthesis by which experience is extended and enriched is then, we have to remember, not merely nor primarily knowledge. We begin by trying and end by knowing. Practice is the parent of theory and realisation the surest verification. We may be repelled by the idealist's paradox of the identity of thought and being, yet we insist that what we immediately experience is reality. If so, the reality, whatever it be besides, is this interaction of cognitive and conative agents : reality is experience. It is in this light that the pluralist seeks to interpret the fact of organization. Whereas naturalism, as we have seen, regards experience as the result of organization, pluralism regards organization as the result of experience : in other words, for the one the question seems to be how the body comes by its soul ; for the other, it is rather how the soul comes by its body. But in truth we know nothing of disembodied souls or of inanimate organisms : experience

and organization appear always to advance together, it will be more exact therefore to say that the naturalist makes function depend entirely on structure while the pluralist holds structure to be mainly determined by function. The opposition is not complete, for, as we have seen, a combination may present itself, which, from the point of view of the individual who turns it to account, is wholly fortuitous. Still even then it is entirely his action in selecting and utilising it that determines its function, and often leads to its further modification.—The multiplicity of parts of which a structure is composed is only a whole or organized when regarded in the light of the specific function which it subserves. This function is the new fact that is more than the sum of their properties, the creative synthesis that makes the parts an individual unity. The determination of structure by function is beyond question in the human affairs from which in the first instance all these teleological concepts of structure, function, organ, end and the like are derived; and it is, of course, on this analogy that the pluralist's interpretation exclusively rests. Let us then consider the characteristics of what we loosely call evolution in this practical realm.

First then, to repeat, it is, proximately at all events, a process of synthesis or epigenesis, not one of strict evolution or preformation. It is needless now to dwell on this point. That the various forms of social organization, political, industrial, academical or artistic, imply the cooperation and consensus of their several members is obvious. But there is another point worth notice in passing. We have called this synthesis creative;

whereas the idea of potentiality, that is rarely long out of sight when development is in question, still suggests that the new was in some sort present, was in some sort, therefore, already preformed in the old—potentially there from the first. We owe this notion entirely to retrospective reflexion. Having seen one acorn in a suitable environment become an oak, we say of a second that it is potentially or virtually an oak already. Not only is such language, strictly speaking, indefensible<sup>1</sup>, it is also worthless in so far as it throws no light on the process which it indicates, but does not even describe. Reality is entirely actuality: the potential, the possible, the problematic, on the other hand, belong exclusively to abstract thought. But that, while it always presupposes, is never commensurate with, reality. Actuality again is entirely experience: its factors are never abstract possibilities, they are living agents; and the result of their interaction is a perennial epigenesis, the only creation that pluralism recognises. *Ex nihilo nihil fit* applies only to what begins to exist. In this sense creation out of nothing, thing supervening on no thing, is a contradiction, so surely as position, affirmation is necessarily prior to deposition, negation. But *e minimo maximum fit* is the truth which the notion of potentiality endeavours to express by inverting the process in idea after it has been realised in fact, realised directly by the creative synthesis for which pluralism contends.

<sup>1</sup> "The more a writer feels himself led naturally to have recourse to this phrase," says Mr Bradley, "the better cause he probably has for at least attempting to avoid it." Cf. his excellent remarks on the whole subject, *Appearance and Reality*, pp. 384-7.

In the next place, then, it will be granted that what synthesis creates in the practical world is not new entities but what we may call new values. As already said, whatever be the ultimate meaning to be assigned to mass and energy, we may allow the bare conservation of this: in respect of it the new would be only formative: there would be no new content. Even the manifold products of human art and industry, steam-engines and dynamos, looms and printing-presses, drugs and explosives, regarded in themselves, are but re-arrangements of so-called forces and elements. It is far otherwise when the human ends for which alone they were devised are taken into account. But most of all when we consider human achievements in literature, science and art, the entire uplift of humanity from its rudest beginning to its present state of civilisation, the social, ethical and religious ideals that it has come to cherish and pursue, we need not hesitate to call all this inestimable store of new worth a veritable creation. Though there is no increase of energy there is an increase of directed energy: though there is no increase of mass there is an increase of determinate structure as the 'will to a higher unity' is realised. The good that is achieved tends not only to be conserved but to grow and advance to worthier forms and that without assignable limits.

But in a social organization there is no absolute opposition between structure and function. As in all organization, function is a unity depending on a complexity of structure. But in the structure the proximate parts are again complex, each having however a single function; and so again of their parts in descending

order. This characteristic the modern pluralist, as we have seen, following the lead of Leibniz, is prepared to extend indefinitely. What we have now to notice are certain consequences which this relation involves, consequences which our social and individual 'experiences plainly verify. The function of a general in the field, for example, is the direction of the campaign as *a whole*: the execution of his orders in *detail* he leaves to the several members of his staff in such wise, that they in turn have to issue further more specific orders to their various adjutants; and so on again and again, till at length thousands of private soldiers are set in motion. But even the movements that these perform are carried out by a so-called 'psycho-physical mechanism,' to which the detailed co-ordination is left: of this they individually know nothing. And throughout, it is this gradual mechanization of lower functions by habit, that makes it possible to concentrate attention on higher functions. We have ample experience of this relief in our acquired dexterities, and it is assumed that the same principle holds good indefinitely.—Similarly if we order shoes we do not need to know how to make them, and the shoemaker in ordering leather has not to tell the currier how to tan it; but in earlier times we may suppose that everyone prepared his hides and made shoes for himself, doing both badly. In such a hierarchy of consentient functions as we are considering, each unit is—to use the Aristotelian phraseology—'form' for the function below it and 'matter' for the function above it. Every form too is conditioned by its appropriate matter: soldiers cannot be effectively manœuvred till they have mastered their drill, nor

good shoes be made without good leather. Thus in all organization there is not only continuity throughout; there is also what the sociologist calls solidarity as well: the higher depends on the lower. And this relation according to pluralism will hold good however far the synthesis may go, however sublime the worth that may be attained. What we shall reach will never be a single unity independent of the plurality beneath, but only the harmonious coordination and consentience of these—ideally, an absolute harmony: in this sense at any rate the Many become more and more one.

But this dependence of the higher on the lower is only half the truth. As our individual and social experiences show us, the lower can also depend upon the higher, and this to an ever-increasing extent as we ascend in the scale of being. As we have already seen, there is according to pluralism no absolutely fixed environment: modification of environment is possible as well as modification by it. And this holds not only of the natural environment but—and still more—of the social environment as well. But for this power of directing it, the progress of development would be, to say the least, immeasurably slower than it is. In respect of this power man is manifestly superior to all creatures beneath him; and among men the civilised man and his community to the savage and his tribe. The drainage or irrigation of the land, the extirpation of tares and the cultivation of wheat, the domestication of useful animals and the destruction of their enemies—all these processes are strictly in line with the working of natural forces or natural selection, but they imply

a definite direction that does not appear in these.—What the schoolmaster, the physician and the philanthropist effect for the amelioration of the masses needs no description. Here again we have definite direction overriding the random and untrained impulses of the natural man. While the progress already made in the physical and social amelioration of human life is inestimable, it is as nothing compared with what is still possible. Nine-tenths of our physical ills are due to ignorance and perhaps a still greater proportion of our social evils are due to selfishness. Present scientific knowledge is adequate to remedy a very large part of the former and the ordinary prudential maxims of utilitarian morality, if they were only observed as they might be, would go far towards extinguishing the latter: they would put at end to the worships of Venus, Bacchus, and Mammon, if even they did not establish peace and chain up the dogs of war for ever. Social reformers and men of action, who seem to be invariably optimists, have often drawn glowing pictures of what this world might be if only all the knowledge and the wisdom that it contains could be effectively put into practice. Before this can be they must be shared by all, of course; but on the other hand it is a sublime though obvious truth, that these highest goods are not diminished by being diffused.

Such millennial dreams are of very ancient date. The Jewish prophet finely symbolizes his Messianic vision as a time when "the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid...and a little child shall lead them...they shall not hurt nor destroy;...for the earth shall be full of the knowledge

of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." And the Christian apostle talks of the whole creation groaning and travailing in pain with us in earnest expectation that it also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption. Fourier, one of the most celebrated socialist writers, believed that an attraction or sympathy, analogous to Newton's principle of gravitation between material bodies, existed throughout the universe and tended to bring about a complete harmony between society, animal life, organic life and so-called dead matter. His speculations and his prophecies as to the changes that were to ensue in the physical world as the socialistic reorganization of society approached perfection were doubtless fanciful in the extreme. Herbert Spencer's attempt to connect absolute ethics and cosmic equilibration, though seemingly more reasonable, is in fact more absurd. For, in making the physical aspect of things the only fundamental and complete one, he is logically driven to ignore the direction of the lower by the higher altogether. The universe for him is like a vast egg which hatches out perfectly by what he was once pleased to call a 'beneficent necessity.'

But if the extravagant fancy of many ultra-utopian visions of a final harmony among things 'seen and temporal' is reprehensible, not less so is the dearth of imagination that can picture nothing new under the sun. It is doubtless a mistake to attempt to forecast the further course of evolution in detail: so far as synthesis is creative this must be impossible save within comparatively narrow limits. But it is equally a mistake to ignore the tendency to progression, which we find not only to exist in fact, but also to follow as



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an *a priori* consequence from the fundamental character of the world as pluralism conceives it. As the world of the mere physicist tends towards a state of final equilibrium, so the world of the personal idealist tends towards a final harmony or equilibration. The Kantian 'principle of community' is applicable to both cases:—"All substances, in so far as they are coexistent, stand in complete community, that is, reciprocity one to another<sup>1</sup>." The nature of the *communio* or *mutuum commercium*, as Kant called it, is, proximately at any rate, very different in the two cases. In a dynamical system, whatever be its initial configuration, there will be continual changes of configuration all tending towards the eventual equilibration of the whole. In a 'personal' system of sentient and conative agents the situation is more complex, even though we do not aim at more than a bare and abstract statement. Here the end of every action is the good: *quidquid petitur petitur sub specie boni*. But the good of each member is dependent on its relation to others, and at the outset involves, as we have seen, more or less blind and aimless struggle: this is the initial state of such a system on the pluralist view. For all members with like interests, however, there will be a common good and a common evil. so far their actions will tend as completely as possible to realise the one and to eliminate the other. If this were all, the case would be simple enough: the parallel between a dynamical system and a personal system would be very close. But the nature of individuality forbids that the immediate interests of any two indi-

<sup>1</sup> *Critique of the Pure Reason*, 1st edn. The Third Analogy of Experience.

viduals should ever be entirely identical. Still even where individual interests collide a common interest in their adjustment might be expected to arise, and did in fact arise as soon as the social level was reached, and it has grown with the progress of society and largely contributed to that progress. Such adjustment is what we call justice, 'the noblest among the virtues' as Aristotle has said.

At the lower level of merely animal life, where conscious cooperation is absent, justice is out of the question. But even here some equilibration is secured by subjective selection, whereby the general environment is, so to say, parcelled out and specialised: so far in the apt words of Pope,

All nature's difference keeps all nature's peace.

Within the same species there must however still be competition so long as its numbers increase beyond the resources of its peculiar habitat. Here we come upon the Malthusian principle and its consequence, natural selection. But again so soon as reason can be brought to bear, an enlightened sense of justice can operate to adjust population to the means of subsistence and to secure the ends blindly attained through natural selection by peaceful and painless means: the arts of eugenics and hygienics may render the struggle for existence unnecessary. Not so in the merely animal world: here natural selection seems unavoidable. But after all natural selection secures progress—of this palaeontology affords ample evidence—and even equilibration in a certain wider sense, i.e. between species and species. In concluding the *Origin of Species* Darwin went so far as to say: "As natural selection

works solely by and for the good of each being, all corporeal and mental endowments will tend to progress towards perfection." Even if we allow this claim there still remains the fact that all the lower forms of life prey one upon another; and mankind takes its full share of such spoils. In this respect there seems to be no eliminating the struggle for existence. We have thus on the whole two principles at work—the ethical at the human level, where justice may be supreme; and the principle that might is right, practically the *Heldenmoral* of Nietzsche. We may call these respectively Rational Selection and Natural Selection.

But there is a vast difference between the individuals concerned in the two cases: a human being is a person, an animal is at best a chattel, in legal phrase. In looking at the world historically as pluralism does, we regard only species of plants and animals but we take account of individual men<sup>1</sup>. If we are content to stop at this division into natural and rational we can maintain a universal tendency towards progress and harmony or equilibration to be characteristic of the world as the pluralist conceives and regards it.

<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to note here the fundamental division of Ethics which Kant makes, grounded on the relation between the obliger and the obliged; according to this jural relations are denied between men and animals because these are "irrational beings devoid of power to oblige and towards whom no obligation can be constituted." *Metaphysik der Sitten*, Hartenstein's edn, VII p. 38.

## LECTURE VI.

### THE PLURALISTIC GOAL.

We have now to face the question what sort of unity would be attained if the ideal were fully realised which the pluralistic interpretation of experience directly suggests. Such an inquiry brings us first of all to the problem, so much discussed of late by sociologists, as to the nature of society. Is society an organism? it is asked. That there are many analogies between society and an organism is certain, and impressive instances of their employment will at once occur to everyone, the fable of Menenius Agrippa, the parable of the vine, and St Paul's exhortation to the Corinthians, for example. But it is obvious too that if an organism must be literally either an animal or a vegetable, then, since society is certainly neither of these, it is not an organism: it lacks the physical continuity that they possess<sup>1</sup>. On the other hand, the more we lay stress on the co-operation of the several individual members and the adjustment of their respective functions, the more justification we shall find for the conception of what we may call sociological, as distinct from biological, organisms—organisms, that is to say, which imply a further and higher evolutionary synthesis. In fact, if

<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless it has a continuity of a higher order, the continuity due to the mutual understanding and co-operation of its constituents. Cf. Fouillée, *Les Éléments sociologiques de la Morale*, 1905, p. 148.

with Kant and Hegel we define the living organism as a unity in which the whole and the parts are reciprocally ends to each other, such a definition seems even more applicable to society than it is to the biological individual, since the constituent members of the latter are not conscious, at least not self-conscious, and, moreover, are not coordinate. This brings us to the heart of the problem that divides sociologists so hopelessly. It is true that the individual man, for example, thinks and wills, and that his several organs—as ordinarily regarded—do not; but, *per contra*, is it not true that while the several members of a commonwealth think and will the society as a whole does not? When Plato and Hobbes compare the state to a vast person and the individual man to a miniature state do they not overlook this essential difference? Is society then really a unity; or is there in any exact sense a social spirit, a social will, a social end, a social conscience?

Two radically different answers have been given to such questions by the so-called realistic and nominalistic sociologists respectively. We are familiar enough with the latter in England: their standpoint is the thoroughly individualistic one characteristic of 18th century speculation in general and of English psychology, ethics, and economics in particular. According to the nominalistic view, a society is a collection of individuals held together by the private interests that association promotes and which the social contract was deliberately formed to secure. Between a collection of  $n$  independent persons, having each his own ends and aims, and the same number formed into a society with ends and aims in common, the only difference—great though it be in its consequences—is, it may be said, essentially an

accidental or extraneous one: it is solely the result of a coincidence of interests. Some animals, like rooks or deer, find it advantageous to congregate together; others, like hawks and tigers, to live apart. Man belongs to the sociable animals, and, owing to his superior intelligence, human society is more elaborate than any found among the lower animals. But in a human society of  $n$  units there is as little ground for regarding the society as an  $n + 1$ th unity with a distinct—and also superior—consciousness and will, as there would be in the humbler but otherwise parallel case of a colony of ants.

The other extreme, the 'realistic' concept of society, is well represented in Hegel's famous doctrine of 'Objective Spirit.' Whereas for the nominalistic extreme, society was the accident and the isolated individuals the substance, here the relation is completely transposed. It is this spirit, Hegel expressly says, that "has reality, and the individuals are but its accidents." If we "proceed atomistically, ascending from the *isolated* individuals [*Einzelheit*] as basis" we shall never, he allows, attain to spirit as objective reality at all, but only to a combination or *Zusammenhang*. That amounts to saying: the nominalistic view is right in its conclusion but its premisses are false. "For [objective] spirit," Hegel continues, "is not an individual thing: rather it is the unity of the individual and the general<sup>1</sup>." As this is sometimes expressed nowadays: Society is a reality but an over-individual reality. Instead of calling the nominalistic premisses false, it would be more exact to say that they are ambiguous: the so-called individual is one being

<sup>1</sup> *Philosophie des Rechtes*, § 156.

out of society and quite another being in it. A hand severed from the living body is a hand no more, Aristotle long ago remarked; and no combination or *Zusammenhang* of *dissecta membra* will ever make a living whole. This is the truth that the whole 18th century failed to grasp, and that the 19th has taught us to appreciate fully. The individuals whom Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau and others imagined deliberately contracting to form society were conceived as already intelligent, and reasoning, i.e. as already social products. —To ask which was first, a polity or man as 'a political animal,' is no better than to ask the trivial question, which was first, the hen or the egg. If by man you mean man as self-conscious and rational, then take him where or when you will he is what he is only because society preceded him. Had your specimens chanced to have lived the life of the legendary wild men of the woods, they could neither have devised nor accepted a social scheme at all. Biologically regarded these two kinds of men would be identical, psychologically the difference between them would be profound. The first, the so-called 'natural man,' is not a man in the second sense, is not a self-conscious, ethical person, at all. To suppose a group of the former should straightway constitute an organic unity of the latter is as absurd as to say that a handful of type is a set of verses.

And yet somehow or other the transition has been effected, it will be said. It has; but the process according to the pluralist's theory was an instance—and the most important one—of that creative synthesis which I have already attempted to describe. As the outcome of such a synthesis both the state and its several self-conscious members are a new creation. Neither the

one nor the other can be found in the primitive horde instinctively drawn together by mutual interests. *Pari passu* the two are evolved together: as the mere crowd of troglodytes become organized into a society they become differentiated as free persons; and again, in proportion as their rights and duties become more clearly defined they in turn attain to a clearer consciousness of themselves as rational and responsible individuals. But still the question presses: Granted that in becoming social the individual man becomes self-conscious and rational, still what exactly is meant when society is called a spiritual organism? What at any rate is *not* meant is an  $n + 1$ th individual somehow superinduced upon the  $n$  individuals constituting its several members, any more than by an organism is meant an  $n + 1$ th organ additional to its complement of  $n$  organs. The objective mind, to use Hegel's phrase, is not something transcendent, existing aloof and apart: it is, on the contrary, the informing spirit immanent in the whole, whereby the several parts rise upwards towards a higher, common life: in this sense it is as he terms it 'the unity of the individual and the general.' To many such language may not seem to mean much or to be very illuminating. But we may perhaps find a helpful illustration by recalling the development of the *Metazoa* or multicellular animals from so-called 'loose colonies' or aggregates of *Protozoa* or unicellular animals, already referred to in an earlier lecture<sup>1</sup>—though the parallel is not exact, since society is not a biological organism. The several cells of a complex organism still retain their identity and continue their individual lives; but if this were all they would remain a mere aggregate; nor would they

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Lecture III. p. 58.



be more, if they differentiated independently. When however they differentiate, as it were in touch with each other, they become mutually complementary. In and with such consentient action there emerges that higher common life, which constitutes them into organs and the whole into an organism. As the unicellular organisms of the protozoan cluster become organs, the cluster becomes a new organism, a metazoan; and *vice versa* as the cluster becomes an organism, the primitive unicellular organisms become organs. In other words the more intimate the unity of the whole the more complete the differentiation of its members. The two in short are strictly correlative, reciprocally cause and effect, means and end to each other. We should accordingly regard it as simply absurd to grant that the cells had become organs while hesitating to recognise that *ipso facto* the cluster had become an organism. If it does not seem equally absurd to allow that the individual man as a social unit is a rational and moral being—and stop there, that is only because familiarity has blinded us to what such an admission implies. Let us then pass on to its explication.

What now do reason and morality imply? It will suffice to go at once to what is for us the main point; they imply what since Kant it has been usual to call 'objectivity.' The sensory and appetitive experiences of a given individual are altogether immediate, beginning and ending with himself, not merely exclusively and inalienably his, but also in their particularity peculiar to him and different from the immediate experiences of all others beside. Such are the characteristics of experience logically included together as subjectivity. Experience as objective is the precise

opposite of this: it is never immediate, determined that is by sense or appetite; nor is it either confined to the individual or contingent to him: on the contrary it is or it may become an unreservedly common possession by virtue of just those factors which we call reason and morality; for these are alike for all and binding on the thought and action of each. In experience as subjective we find only the particular and contingent: in experience as objective we find always the universal and necessary. To subjective experience as such Leibniz's description will apply; it mirrors the universe from a particular and unique standpoint; to objective experience as such on the other hand that description is not applicable.

Objectivity cannot then be a characteristic of a purely individual experience, and to say that it is universal or common to all cannot mean that—like the blackness of crows, to use a trivial illustration—it is singly and separately developed in each. To God, it is true, Leibniz applied the old saying “that as a centre He is everywhere, but His circumference is nowhere<sup>1</sup>.” Such language may be taken to imply an experience that is at once completely subjective and completely objective, at once altogether individual and altogether absolute. But such an experience entirely transcends our conception.—With this we may couple a well-known quotation from Aristotle's *Politics*; “He who has no need of society because he is sufficient for himself, must either be a brute or a god.” No wonder the transition from brute to man, from sense and appetite to reason and law, seemed inconceivable apart from special divine interference, so long as it was regarded

<sup>1</sup> *Principles of Nature and Grace*, § 13.

as taking place in each individual *singulatim*, as prior to the dawn of evolutionary ideas it invariably was. Still this long failure of individualism scientifically to bridge the gulf between man and brute is strong testimony to the living unity of the social organism. Through this objective mind, then, pervading all its members, and not through any infusion from without, each one in being social becomes human. It is true that society is wholly constituted by its members, and is nothing apart from them, but it is equally true that in forming it they *pro tanto* transfigure and at the same time transcend their isolated selves. By intersubjective intercourse they attain to the transsubjective or truly objective, both in knowledge and in action; and the more clearly they differentiate themselves from others the more distinct their own self-conscious personality becomes.

This reference to self-consciousness brings us to a new point well deserving of a moment's consideration. It was Kant's great merit to have signalled the mutual implication of self-consciousness and objectivity in the higher or epistemological sense just defined. "That all the various elements of our empirical consciousness must be bound together in one self-consciousness is," he says, "the absolutely first foundation of our thinking at all<sup>1</sup>." Such is the import of what he has made known as the 'synthetic unity of apperception.' But in his exposition of this principle in what he entitled the 'deduction (i.e. justification) of the categories' Kant alternates between two distinct inquiries, to the mutual confusion of both. The one he calls the subjective deduction, the other

<sup>1</sup> *Critique of the Pure Reason*, 1st edn, Max Muller's trans. p. 103 note.

the objective. The first is largely a psychological inquiry: it shows all the worst faults of the old psychology of ready-made faculties, and it is oblivious of all questions of development. That it was defective, Kant was from the first more or less dimly aware, and he was driven by adverse criticisms in the end practically to abandon it<sup>1</sup>. What he did not see was that, from the nature of the case, his so-called subjective deduction could not be conclusive. The question really was, How does objective experience arise? and Kant in the first edition of his *Critique* set himself to answer this question—very much as Locke might have done—that is to say, by observing the process in the working of his own mind as it was when the genesis of all the functions or faculties concerned was already complete. Or what comes ultimately to the same thing, he adopted the analysis of 'the intellectual powers' provided ready to his hand in the psychology then current, an analysis reached in the usual individualistic fashion, and vitiated by the psychologist's fallacy of attributing to the growing mind the powers that only gradually emerge as its development proceeds. It was as if an anatomist should say that the eyes and hands were already preformed in the embryo; and as we have seen anatomists did actually say this. In biology however the hypothesis of literal evolution at length gave way to the hypothesis of epigenesis and only lingered on in psychology, where its fallaciousness was less palpable. But in the *Prolegomena*, written five years later to

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Kant's preface to the 1st edn of the *Critique*, pp. xxvi f., and his preface to the *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Naturwissenschaften*, Hartenstein's edn, Vol. iv. pp. 363 ff.

obviate difficulties and meet criticisms, Kant made an important distinction between what he called judgments of experience, which have objective validity, and mere judgments of perception, which are only subjectively valid. He then proceeds to add:—"All our judgments are at first mere perception-judgments: they hold good simply for us, i.e. for our subjectivity. It is only subsequently that we give them a new reference, namely to an object, and intend (*wollen*) that they shall hold good for us not only at the moment but at all other times, and in like manner for all other persons." Again a couple of pages later he states this difference between the two acts of judgment as follows:—In the one "I merely compare the percepts and combine them in one consciousness of my own state," in the other I compare and combine them in one consciousness in general (*einem Bewusstsein überhaupt*)<sup>1</sup>.

Within these statements there is room for all that we have to contend for. The so-called judgments of perception are the nearest approach to a true, explicit, judgment possible to the individual apart from inter-subjective intercourse. The observation of the lower animals and of children furnishes ample evidence of this, and nowadays it is, I believe, questioned by nobody<sup>2</sup>. Between the stage of these perceptive judgments and that at which judgments-proper arise—judgments,

<sup>1</sup> *Prolegomena* §§ 18, 20.

<sup>2</sup> Kant himself in another connexion had noted this fact some twenty years before he gave his *Critique* to the world; though even then he seemed to attribute the difference between man and the lower animals to reason as a 'heaven-sent faculty'—to use a phrase of Mr Bradley's—rather than to reason as the result of social development. (Cf. the paper 'On the false subtilty of the syllogistic figures,' *Werke*, Hartenstein's edn, II. pp. 67 f.)

that is to say, having an objective import, and which Kant was content to speak of merely as 'subsequent'—there intervenes the whole long process of social development. This is implied in their characteristic as judgments valid for consciousness generally, valid not merely for me and now but for all and always. Unless then I am conscious not simply of myself but of others who are conscious of themselves and of me, I cannot so much as understand what objective validity means, to say nothing of affirming that it exists.

We come then to Kant's main position, the objective deduction, viz. that apperception—or that consciousness of objects which goes with self-consciousness—as opposed to perception, is the pre-condition of all intelligent and scientific experience. What we are here concerned about is not to call the principle in question but simply to indicate and emphasize the one point that Kant completely overlooked. It is a fact, at any rate, that 'the absolutely first foundation of such objective experience' is to be found only in society, in intersubjective intercourse, and not in 'apperception as a faculty' pertaining to the isolated individual mind<sup>1</sup>. But though Kant, and I may add, most of his commentators and critics, overlook this fact, they do not mean to deny it. Not only is it implied, as I have just said, in the necessity and universality which Kant assigns as the marks of judgments proper, or judgments of experience; but it is more or less explicitly recognised in his various formulations of the moral law or categorical imperative: "Act only according to that

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the passage already cited, p. 124 above.

maxim which thou canst at the same time will should be a universal law," i.e. "Act so as to use humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of another, always as an end, never as merely a means<sup>1</sup>."

It is in this ethical connexion that Kant's most distinguished English commentator, E. Caird, insisted at some length on what he himself called the 'objective and social character of self-consciousness.' I will venture to quote some sentences, because they help, I think, to explain the general oversight which we have just noticed:—"It may be truly said that we find ourselves in others before we find ourselves in ourselves, and that the full consciousness of self comes only through the consciousness of beings without us who are also selves. Self-consciousness in one is kindled by self-consciousness in another, and a social community of life is presupposed in our first consciousness of ourselves as individual persons. It is true, indeed, that in his first return upon self, the individual is conscious rather of opposition to, than of community with, the other selves to whom he finds himself in relation....But we should not be misled by the self-seeking and self-will, which are the first manifestations of selfhood, so as to forget that the individual's consciousness of himself as an independent self is essentially a return upon self from the consciousness of others which it implies....In the first instance the subject...does not reflect on the relativity by which this independent selfhood is mediated and especially on the social unity which it presupposes; and therefore

<sup>1</sup> *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Ethics*, H.'s edn, Vol. iv. pp. 269, 277.

he can see no claim which other beings and things have upon him to be used otherwise than as means to his own ends<sup>1</sup>." That man's primitive egoism in practical life has helped to hide the social implications of self-consciousness seems to me a remark that is both new and true.

There is still a further remark of some importance that may opportunely be made here. It is often said that experience cannot actually "testify to anything more than the existence of the subject—the existence of a plurality of similar Ego's is an inference, a hypothesis to explain the phenomena<sup>2</sup>." But drawing inferences and framing explanatory hypotheses presuppose a self-conscious intelligence already possessed of that objective experience, which by implying its own universality and necessity, implies also a plurality of selves. On this assumption then we come to a deadlock or find ourselves revolving in a hopeless circle. But the escape is simple, once we recognise that experience from the outset involves both subject and object, both self and other, and that the differentiation of both factors proceeds strictly *pari passu*.

We conclude then that society is truly a living reality, though a complex and over-individual one. To it belongs the objective mind that is at once immanent in and dominant over its several members, who thereby attain to self-consciousness and think and

<sup>1</sup> *The Critical Philosophy of Kant*, II. pp. 371 f. Another writer who has done much to bring out the social character of self-consciousness is Prof. Royce see, for example, his *Outlines of Psychology*, § 115. •

<sup>2</sup> So said the late Professor Ritchie, for example, *Mind*, O. S. XIII. p. 258.



act as rational persons. But societies as they actually exist to-day are comparable to those less perfectly developed *Metazoa* in which the differentiation and unification of functions is still very incomplete and the scope of life very restricted in its range. Many of these societies seem little more than reduplications of similar parts without any supreme and central principle or purpose, like certain organisms that are made up of a chain of ganglionated segments and have little or no brain. Some indeed are so loosely organized as to allow of division without much deterioration. Even the modern national states, that have attained to the highest stage of civilisation so far known, are still in a large measure mutually alien and exclusive, whereas the society with which philosophy is concerned is synonymous with humanity, nay it is even spoken of as cosmopolitan. It is happily true already that as regards the higher life of man, society is wider than any single political state, and its unifying spirit inspires, though but partially and imperfectly, the whole civilised world.

How far will this progress extend? To attempt to forecast the future development of humanity in detail would indeed be idle. The element of contingency, which the individuality of its ultimate factors introduces into history, alone suffices to restrain the consistent pluralist from all prophecies of this sort. But, on the other hand, his general *Weltanschauung* leads him—as we have seen—to believe in a universal tendency towards perfection as the very principle of life<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Such tendency towards perfection was several times enounced by Leibniz. As an instance may be cited the following: "Not only

The pluralist's view of the world leads him also to regard this progress as consisting in the advance towards a 'higher unity.' To set over against this, though the problem of evil is still serious enough, there is for the pluralist no 'evil one'—no *principle* of evil in the world; and also no *pure* malevolence, no *radikale Böse*, as Kant called it, in the individual. All things in the main and in the long run, he holds, work together for good. Or, to put it otherwise, there is a conservation and a solidarity of the good such as does not exist for evil<sup>1</sup>. *Magna est veritas et praevalerebit*: there are truths that wake to perish never, but errors never harmonize and tend inherently to refute one another. The memory of the just is blessed, but the name of the wicked shall rot.

Obviously if the hindrances to progress were insurmountable, there could have been no progress at all. But it might still be that the hindrances increased as progress advanced, that sooner or later a sort of 'law of diminishing return' would begin to operate. We are told however that even in the economic sphere of man's activity the law of diminishing return holds only of "the part which Nature plays in produc-

do immaterial things subsist always, but also their lives, progress and changes are regulated so as to attain to a definite goal, or rather to approximate towards it more and more, as asymptotes of progress, though the movements are retrograde sometimes, like paths, have bends in them, yet the advance prevails finally and the end has reached." Letter to Queen Charlotte, *Philosophische Schriften*, Gerhardt's edn, vi. pp. 507 ff.

<sup>1</sup> That the essence of religion is 'faith in the conservation of value' is the main theme in Professor Hoffding's original and interesting *Philosophy of Religion*.

tion," while "the part which man plays conforms to the law of increasing return" and this part "tends to diminish or even override any increased resistance which Nature may offer to raising increased amounts of raw produce<sup>1</sup>." There is then, we may say with some confidence, no *a priori* ground for any analogy between spiritual culture and agriculture in respect of cumulative hindrances to progress. We have indeed only to look closer at the two most serious obstacles to social advance to see that they tend to be less formidable, in proportion, the further the advance proceeds. I refer, of course, to ignorance and selfishness. It may suffice to consider the last and worst—for society and selfishness are in their very essence opposed. The conflict of self-interest and duty to others has long been a commonplace with ethical writers; and it has even been maintained that without extra-social sanctions there is no means of bringing that wholly imaginary person, the consistent egoist, to work for the general good. Yet after all what keeps the selfish man most in countenance is the selfishness of others: he does to others as they in general do to him, not as he would that they should do. But at least he cannot will that the egoistic maxim should be a universal law. He approves such examples of public spirit and philosophy as he may see, though he does not follow pluralism, and he is ready perhaps to support beneficent schemes of legislation to promote ends for which he is unwilling to make private sacrifices. This fortunate, and—we might add—inevitable, inconsistency permits

<sup>1</sup> Prof. A. Marshall, *Principles of Economics*, vol. 1. 1st edn, p. 379.

social sanctions to stand out clearly and to become more efficient with every advance that better men effect. *Probitas laudatur et alget*, the satirist has said, yet in truth even bare consideration and approval do their part in quickening virtue into life. In short the objective mind or reason, in which the selfish share, divides them, as selfish, against themselves both individually and collectively, and leads them in their own despite to further its coherent ends :

ἐσθλοὶ μὲν γὰρ ἅπλως, παντοδαπῶς δὲ κακοί.

"This may be called the cunning of reason," said Hegel, "that she permits the passions to work for herself so that what they produce [for themselves] is forfeited and lost<sup>1</sup>." So again T. H. Green:—"Where the selfishness of man has proposed, his better reason has disposed. Whatever the means, the result has been a gradual removal of obstacles to that recognition of a universal fellowship which the action of reason in man potentially constitutes<sup>2</sup>." Such at least is the broad teaching of history so far.

Extreme as the selfishness of many may still be and rare as is any whole-hearted enthusiasm for humanity, yet the progress already made is amply sufficient to show that the direction in which it has moved and is still moving points towards the ultimate conciliation of self-interest and the common good. This progress may seem small, partly because to us the time it has taken looks immense, and partly because it still falls indefinitely short of the ideal that we entertain. But

<sup>1</sup> *Philosophie der Geschichte*, 1840, p. 41.

<sup>2</sup> Green, *Prolegomena to Ethics*, p. 230.

the problems that time involves do not much concern us in this connexion. *Der Weltgeist hat Zeit genug*, as Hegel once said, and in contemplating the world historically we have to accustom ourselves to regard a thousand years as one day. Compared with the age of the earth itself man's appearance upon it began but yesterday, and he has hardly yet emerged from the stage of infancy.

And now what has been the direction of this progress on its moral, that is its highest, side? We start from a state of natural selfishness, in which the life of the individual man, to use the memorable words of Hobbes, is "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short"; and we find ourselves in the era of Christian civilisation, where—to quote T. H. Green again—"the recognition of the claims of a common humanity' is a phrase that has become so familiar...that we are apt to suspect it of being cant. Yet this very familiarity is proof of the extent to which the idea...has affected law and institutions<sup>1</sup>." This humanitarian idea then is operative now, though its full realisation is our still distant ideal. But if it is fully realisable, the fact that this realisation is a 'far-off event' does not, I would say again, very directly concern our present inquiry: for that, such eventual realisation is enough. "To any ethical student who finds its realisation difficult, I recommend," said Stuart Mill, "as a means of facilitating it, the second of M. Comte's two principal works, the *Système de Politique Positive*...It has superabundantly shown the possibility of giving to the service of humanity, even without the aid of belief in a Providence,

<sup>1</sup> *Prolegomena to Ethics*, p. 228.

both the psychical power and the social efficacy of a religion ; making it take hold of human life, and colour all thought, feeling and action, in a manner of which the greatest ascendancy ever exercised by any religion may be but a type and foretaste<sup>1</sup>." Kant, like Wordsworth and Coleridge, was inspired with a like confidence by what he describes as the moral enthusiasm for the ideal displayed in the French Revolution<sup>2</sup>. It cannot be said, however, that either Kant or Mill attempted anything like a philosophical deduction of this faith in human progress and perfectibility. Other modern philosophers in plenty have attempted this, no doubt—for example Lessing, Herder, Krause, Hegel, and many besides ; but always on grounds more or less definitely theological. But to the pluralist this tendency is clear in itself so soon as we allow that all at least *seek* the good and therefore tend to replace an initial state of comparative isolation and conflict by progressively higher forms of unity and cooperation. When the level of society and reason is reached, this tendency is no longer a blind impulse, it has become a conscious ideal. We emerge from the darkness, where we could only grope, into the light where we can see at least in which direction our ideal lies. "The practical struggle after the Better...makes the way by which the Best is to be more nearly approached plain enough" for further advance and also more feasible. This point has been worked out at length by T. H. Green. To the objection that it does not precisely define the course in which the advance is to be made we may reply in the

<sup>1</sup> *Utilitarianism*, p. 49.

<sup>2</sup> 'Streit der Facultaten,' *Werke*, Hartenstein's edn, vii. pp. 399 f.

words of Professor Bosanquet:—"The difficulty of defining the best life does not trouble us, because we rely throughout on the fundamental logic of human nature *qua* rational. We think ourselves no more called upon to specify in advance what will be the details of the life which satisfies an intelligent being as such, than we are called upon to specify in advance what will be the details of the knowledge which satisfies an intelligent being as such. Wherever a human being touches practice, as wherever he touches theory, we find him driven on by his intolerance of contradictions towards shaping his life as a whole<sup>1</sup>." Reason makes man master of his fate, and though slowly, yet surely, urges him onwards to the accomplishment of her perfect work.

We come at length then to the question, stated at the outset, what sort of unity will the realisation of the rational ideal secure? The answer may be very brief. "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." To imagine this petition answered is to imagine humanity animated by a single wise and righteous will: every citizen would work harmoniously with every other, each one doing the highest and the best of which he is capable. The will of the Many and the will of the One would accord completely. But on the pluralist view the Divine will would only be a reality as it was the ideal towards which the whole creation moves, attained at length. The Kingdom would take the place of the ideal King: there would be a perfect commonwealth, but strictly no monarch,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. T. H. Green, *Prolegomena to Ethics*, Bk III. ch. iii.; Bosanquet, *The Philosophic Theory of the State*, p. 181.

other than 'the objective mind' sovereign in every breast.

Such is, I believe, in the main a fair presentation of the pluralistic *Weltanschauung*. The time it has occupied may I fear have tired the patience of many of you. It still remains to consider the objections to which it is liable—many of which will no doubt have occurred to you already—and the replies to them which the pluralist can make. But first it will repay us, I think, to take account of some underlying affinities between the pluralist position and that of certain philosophers commonly regarded as singularists, which seems to be directly contrary to it.



## LECTURE VII.

### THE PLURALISM OF HEGEL.

The standpoint of pluralism in our day is, as we have seen, fundamentally historical. It is a philosophy of becoming rather than of being. It holds—as has been said of the philosophy of Aristotle—that “the ultimate metaphysical explanation of existence must be sought not so much in a *prius* out of which things emerge as in the goal towards which they move<sup>1</sup>.” That goal, so experience seems to show, is indeed an ultimate unity, which however presupposes a real plurality: but no attempt is made to conceive the plurality as due to a differentiation of a unity pre-existing ‘before the world was’ and anterior to any conceivable experience. The three great singularistic philosophies of the nineteenth century however did venture on this bold enterprise, and it is, as we have seen, largely their conspicuous failure that has brought pluralism into vogue again. Now the last and chief of these, the philosophy of Hegel, is by common consent a philosophy of history in the widest sense, whatever it may be besides; and mainly, if not solely, as such is it generally acknowledged to be of great positive value. It will then be interesting as well as instructive to compare Hegelianism with pluralism in respect of their common historical ground. Such a

<sup>1</sup> Pringle-Pattison, *Hegelianism and Personality*, 1st edn, p. 82.

comparison will become more significant when it is remembered, as Hegel's critics urge and his exponents allow, that the so-called dialectical development of thought as such, in which he attempts to find the unity that transcends the seeming plurality, is only distinct from the historical development by being abstracted from it after reflexion has revealed its presence there<sup>1</sup>.

Regarding things historically Hegel found development everywhere, i.e. found not a statical world like that of the Eleatics but a dynamical one like that of Heracleitus. His leading ontological concept was more akin to the active subject of the pluralist Leibniz than to the indifferent substance of the singularist Spinoza. No doubt he reached in the end a unity which he called absolute; but in his *Philosophy of Nature* and of *Mind*, where he first comes into touch with the real world, it is plurality that chiefly obtrudes itself. Yet, while recognising the "spectacle of a contingency that runs out into endless detail," Hegel treats it in the most contemptuous manner. The starry heavens that filled Kant with awe he thinks it fitting to call a "luminous rash...as little deserving of wonder as the rash on a human skin<sup>2</sup>." The wealth

<sup>1</sup> Hegel has himself described philosophy as 'thinking consideration of things' (*denkende Betrachtung der Dinge*, *Encycl.* § 2), and in his first systematic work, the *Phenomenology of Mind*, he undertakes to provide 'the ladder' by which the beginner may ascend into the 'ether' where the dialectic transfiguration enacts itself. But he so far overreached his purpose that, like theatrical managers at a fair, he has given us on the boards outside, as it were, a preliminary and more or less tentative outline of his whole system. Hence he also called the *Phenomenology* his voyage of discovery: in this bewildering adventure psychology and history play the leading part.

<sup>2</sup> *Naturphilosophie*, § 268, p. 92.

of forms, organic and inorganic, that Nature presents, ought not as such, he maintained, "to be rated higher than the equally casual fancies of the mind surrendering itself to its own caprices." "Contingent determination from without has," he says again, "in the sphere of Nature its right place<sup>1</sup>." But such language is mere *bravado* in the face of a serious difficulty, with which Hegel had not the patience to deal—or rather a difficulty with which a philosophy such as his could not have dealt at all. As Professor Pringle-Pattison has well said: "A system of rationalism which talks of what 'is determined not by reason but by sport and external accident' [as Hegel has done] must fairly be held to acknowledge a breakdown in its attempt to grasp the whole of existence<sup>2</sup>." The first point we have to notice then is, that in admitting our inability to eliminate contingency Hegel has also admitted our inability to eliminate the plurality which it implies. "This impotence of Nature sets limits to philosophy" he tells us. Whether 'impotence' is the right name for the fact may well be questioned; but the one point that concerns us meanwhile is Hegel's recognition of the fact itself. Nature is for Hegel historically the first stage of the real world, and here at the outset he finds himself confronted and limited by the very plurality and contingency from which the pluralist too makes his start. What he calls the 'impotence of Nature' is historically just that inchoate state of things which the progress of history is supposed gradually to straighten out.

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.* § 250, p. 36.

<sup>2</sup> *Hegelianism and Personality*, 1st edn, p. 138.

Taking this progress in its widest extent, the processes of what we call nature fall within it, and are to be regarded, Hegel himself tells us, as a system of stages leading up to Mind, which emerges from Nature like the phoenix from its ashes<sup>1</sup>. But though one of the stages proceeds from the other, it is not, Hegel goes on to insist, “*naturally* generated out of the other; on the contrary it [is generated] in the inner Idea that constitutes the ground of Nature<sup>2</sup>.” In other words his meaning seems to be that the process is really timeless, or as Goethe put it

Natur hat weder Kern  
Noch Schale,  
Alles ist sie mit einem Male<sup>3</sup>.

Accordingly in a lecture-note to the passage quoted he adds: “The notion puts all particularity in a general way into existence at once.” In saying all this Hegel seems plainly to be trying to take back with one hand what he has yielded with the other. Or, to put it otherwise, he oscillates between two different kinds of development—the dialectical, which is timeless as well as abstract and general, and the historical which involves time-process and deals primarily with the concrete and particular. For us at any rate the experience of this latter development is essential to our knowledge of the former, which—according to Hegel’s

<sup>1</sup> *Naturphilosophie*, § 247, p. 24, § 376, p. 695.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.* § 249, p. 32.

<sup>3</sup> This we might perhaps translate:

Nature has neither shell  
Nor kernel,  
She’s all at once in the eternal.

own teaching—belongs to its subsequent and latest phase. Indeed he has said more than once of philosophy in general what in his introduction he has expressly said of the Philosophy of Nature in particular:—both as regards its origin and its elaboration it has experience for its presupposition and condition<sup>1</sup>. We might here fairly remind Hegel of a caution he has himself uttered:—“In respect of Mind and its manifestations [just as in the case of Nature] we must be on our guard lest we be misled by the well-meant endeavour after rational knowledge into attempting to represent as necessary or, as the phrase is, to construct *a priori*, phenomena to which the mark of contingency pertains<sup>2</sup>.” Even if it turn out that the dialectical method holds good for the timeless development, yet it is not a heuristic method; at the outset philosophy as ‘the thinking consideration of things’ has to begin with its ‘voyages of discovery.’ The greater part of Hegel’s Philosophy of Nature and of Mind is of this sort<sup>3</sup>.

And here in common with the pluralist he finds, as we have already seen, plurality and contingency everywhere, and we have now further to note that he finds also a gradual historical progress from nature to spirit, from nature as a ‘bacchantic God’ to ‘free spirit—the truth that knowing knows itself’—a progress that in all essential points corresponds with that which in the exposition of pluralism I have already attempted to describe. All this, we have to insist, antecedes for us the timeless notional development which Hegel

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Encyclopaedie*, §§ 6, 7, 12, 38, 246.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.* § 145.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. such categories as Mechanism, Chemism, Life, &c.

attempts to blend with it. The problem of time in relation to the dialectic is one of the many that Hegel left wholly to his successors: it is perhaps the most serious aspect of that 'ugly broad ditch' with which Schelling taunted his quondam friend in a phrase embodying the most trenchant criticism the Hegelian philosophy has ever received.

We come to a new point. Things are not altogether contingent or progressive, though there is contingency and progress everywhere: what we find is 'uniformity flecked with diversity.' The uniformity in general we refer to nature as mechanical, and the diversity and progress to life or mind. This contrast too Hegel has noticed. "The changes in nature," he says, "indefinitely manifold as they are, exhibit only a routine that is ever repeated: in nature there happens nothing new under the sun.... It is only in the changes taking place on the spiritual platform that novelty comes to the fore." Again he speaks of nature as "a system of unconscious thoughts, as an intelligence that, as Schelling said, is petrified<sup>1</sup>." Such language at once reminds us of the distinction between *natura naturans* and *natura naturata* as the pluralist interprets it. The former answers to nature as full of contingency, which is the very opposite of routine; the latter to nature as mechanical and devoid of novelty, in itself but the 'corpse of the understanding,' as Hegel calls it; the dead self on which we rise to higher things, as the pluralist maintains. The mechanization of habit, dexterity as consisting in making the body the uncon-

<sup>1</sup> *Philosophie der Geschichte*, 1837, p. 51. *Encyclopaedie*, § 24, Lecture Note 1.

scious instrument of the soul, in and through which it expresses itself as if the body were the soul's work of art, and so forth—all this Hegel recognises to the full and describes in detail. It cannot indeed be said that he expressly traces back these psychological facts as far as the pluralist attempts to do; but it might be fairly maintained that his view of nature justifies such a procedure.

In the first place Hegel was no dualist: the whole process of nature is to become spirit, and spirit it is in itself or potentially from the beginning. But actually at the outset it is infinite isolation or dismemberment (*Vereinzelung*), and its unity is still to seek. It advances from this to the natural individuality or particularity of physical bodies and finally to the subjective individuality of organisms<sup>1</sup>. At this level sentience emerges and we pass over into the realm of mind, the individual existing for itself. The earlier, so-called inorganic processes pluralism explicitly interprets, in Leibnizian fashion, as also in some measure sentient and conative. In his *Philosophy of Nature* Hegel was too much under the influence of Schelling and dominated by his 'polarity myth' for this. But occasionally he comes very near to the Leibnizian standpoint. Thus he describes a soul as such, as "in itself the totality of nature; as individual soul it is a monad; it is itself the posited totality of its *particular* world, so that this is shut up within it, is its content." And again: "In contrast to the macrocosm of Nature as a whole, the soul can be designated the microcosm, in which the former is compressed (*zusammengedrängt*)

<sup>1</sup> *Naturphilosophie*, § 252.

and its externality thereby overcome<sup>1</sup>." This metaphorical language, by the way, looks very like nonsense: how the soul is going to condense the world or how compression is to put an end to externality is not evident. But what Hegel means, we may suppose, is what Leibniz also meant: the world is for every soul a presented, or—in the language of the first passage—a 'posited totality'—or continuum. Now all this, it must be remembered, is said, *not* of the higher stages of mental development, which Hegel distinguishes as spirit (*Geist*); it is said of what he calls the natural and the sentient soul, the stage of obscurity (*Dunkelheit*) before the soul has attained to a conscious and intelligible content<sup>2</sup>—the stage, in a word, of Leibniz's 'confused perception.' And who is to say how far back this obscurity extends? All we know of it we know because we do not begin with it but approach it from the light and interpret it in terms of what it has become. And this is the method of pluralism.

But now, it may be said, in the second place—indeed it has been said by a thoroughgoing Hegelian—that this principle of interpreting the lower on the analogy of the higher was recognised by Hegel too. Comparing the opposite processes of evolution and emanation—or, as I have proposed to call it, devolution—both of which have been employed in the interpretation of nature, he expresses a preference for the latter. "To proceed from the more perfect to the less perfect is more advantageous," he says; "for then we have the type of the completed organism before

<sup>1</sup> *Philosophy of Mind*, Encycl. III. §§ 391, 403. Cf. also § 352, Zusatz, Encycl. II.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.* § 404.



us": albeit he held both methods to be 'one-sided and superficial'.<sup>1</sup> How then should we proceed, how, in fact, do we proceed? "It is clear," said G. H. Lewes, "that we should never rightly understand vital phenomena were we to begin our study of life by contemplating its simplest manifestations in the animal series; we can only understand the Amoeba and the Polype by a light reflected from the study of Man." In quoting this passage the late Professor Ritchie, the Hegelian I just now referred to, adds the remark: "What makes it seem possible for the scientific investigator 'to begin at the beginning' is the fact that he is not doing so. The student of the Amoeba happens to be, not an Amoeba, but a specimen of a highly developed vertebrate, and knows at least something about the differentiated organs and functions of his own body<sup>2</sup>." What we do then is by means of our knowledge of the higher to interpret the lower, while at the same time recognising that the actual process has been a development of the lower upwards towards the higher. With all this we may fairly say that Hegel was in complete agreement, once we have disallowed his attempts to play fast and loose with the two distinct kinds of developments—the historical and the dialectic. He does interpret the lower by the higher, he does admit an actual historical evolution, and he does insist that Nature is potentially mental from the first, so that the historical evolution is, no

<sup>1</sup> *Naturphilosophie*, Encycl. II. § 249, p. 35.

<sup>2</sup> G. H. Lewes, *Study of Psychology*, p. 122; D. G. Ritchie, 'Darwin and Hegel' in the *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, vol. I. p. 59.

*generatio equivoca*. "The appearance," he remarks, "as if [the existence of] Mind were brought about through an Other, is disposed of by Mind itself; for this—so to say—has the supreme ingratitude to resolve and mediate that through which it seems to be produced, to reduce it to dependence on itself and to establish its own complete independence<sup>1</sup>."

Let us now look at Hegel's handling of this evolution a little closer. His *Philosophy of History* is professedly little more than a philosophy of political history. The progress that it traces is the progress of freedom as realised in the objective mind or society; but freedom, it should be observed, is regarded as identical with spiritual perfection generally; and so he describes 'world-history' as "the exhibition of mind as it works out the knowledge of what it is in itself." The realisation of this ideal, he explains, is the final end, the working principle, the informing notion of history. But, as such, a principle is only general, abstract, and potential; in order to its realisation a further factor is essential: in history proper this factor is the activity of human beings. But an end for which I am to be active must be in some sense my end: even if it have other aspects that do not concern me, still it is my own satisfaction that makes it interesting to me. He concludes then "that absolutely nothing is brought to pass without the interest of those who actively co-operated in it:...that *nothing great in the world* is accomplished without passion<sup>2</sup>."

Reason the card, but passion is the gale.

<sup>1</sup> *Philosophy of Mind*, Encycl. III. § 381, p. 23.

<sup>2</sup> *Philosophie der Geschichte*, 1837, p. 28.

The history of the world in the widest sense, however, goes further back than this; and though Hegel regarded it as neither fitting nor worthy of philosophy to take up the story before rationality comes upon the scene, he nevertheless has some introductory remarks concerning the pre-historic. These are important as further bearing out what has just been said about the spiritualistic continuity of the whole process of evolution as Hegel conceived it, and as making clearer the pluralistic basis that it implies. Having insisted that "nothing happens, nothing is accomplished save as the individuals actively concerned in it secure their own satisfaction," he continues: "But the world's history does not begin with any conscious end, such as we find in particular centres of men. The simple impulse to live together has already the conscious end of security for life and property, and so soon as this life in common is attained the end is [further] enlarged. The world's history begins only potentially (i.e. as Nature) with its general end, the full realisation of the notion of spirit. That end is its inner, nay its inmost unconscious impulse, and the entire business of the world-history is the labour of bringing it to consciousness. Thus making its appearance in the form of natural beings, natural wills, what has been called the subjective side [of history] is straightway present for itself<sup>1</sup>." Translated into pluralistic language this amounts to saying: A plurality of conative beings at first casually interacting in pursuance of their several particular and immediate impulses gradually come to have ends and continually widening ends in common,

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 29.

thereby advancing towards the complete realisation of the one objective end of history that is now to be regarded as its potential principle from the first.

We are not then surprised to find Hegel too describing and illustrating—as we have already done under the title ‘heterogony of ends’<sup>1</sup>—the fact that in the course of the world’s history the actions of mankind are continually realising ends that they neither intended nor foresaw. But the explanation which he seeks to give of this fact is very different from that of the pluralist. He regards human interests and actions in the first instance simply as instruments and means. Through them the absolute final purpose of the world’s history is carried out, but carried out as something beyond and external to them—just as a house is erected by means of natural forces and elements that have no concern with its inner end, which in fact is to keep *them* at bay. But this illustration, which please understand is Hegel’s own<sup>2</sup>, at once and very pointedly raises the question: Where in the case of the world’s history is the guiding and controlling mind to be found that corresponds to the architect in the case of the house? It must have a place somewhere in one or other of the three great divisions of Hegel’s philosophy. But where? Obviously not in the *Logic*, for that lies on the other side of everything like historical and natural development, as Hegel expressly

<sup>1</sup> Lect. iv. above, p. 79.

<sup>2</sup> *Philosophie der Geschichte*, 1840, p. 34. This illustration was omitted by Gans, the editor of the 1837 edition, who professed to follow Hegel’s own revision; but it was inserted in the second edition by Hegel’s son Karl, Gans having in the meantime died.

maintained. It is the realm of pure thought, not the realm of ends. In the *Philosophies of Nature and of Mind* the *Logic* is applied; but their contents, as such, do not enter into it or concern it. Perception, imagination and the like, which belong to self-conscious mind, are to be as completely excluded from logic as are the forms of space and time and the phenomena, inorganic or organic, which fill them out. The 'notion' is not to be regarded as an act of the self-conscious, subjective, intellect: even the term 'objective thought' is awkward as applied to it, for *thought* is usually referred only to mind or consciousness, and *objective* in like manner primarily only to the unconscious<sup>1</sup>.

Let us turn next to the *Philosophy of Mind*; for in his *Philosophy of History* Hegel often refers to the 'world-spirit' as that which directs and controls the actions of men to subserve its own supreme end. But what does Hegel himself tell us in the *Philosophy of Mind* about this 'world-spirit'? "This movement," he says referring to the course of history, "is the way, whereby the spiritual substance is liberated—the deed, whereby the absolute final purpose of the world is accomplished in it, [whereby] the spirit that at first exists only *potentially* (*an sich*)...becomes the world-spirit<sup>2</sup>." Actually then, it would seem, the world-spirit corresponds to the realised plan of the house rather than to the architect who shapes and controls the materials. A plan does not ordinarily carry itself out. Still, it may be urged, a mere illustration is not to be pressed. That, of course, is true; but on the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Logic*, III. pp. 21, 18; *Encyclopaedic*, § 24.

<sup>2</sup> *Philosophy of Mind*, *Encycl.* III. § 549 *init.*

other hand it is to be remembered that, according to Hegel's own statement, the world-spirit is only potentially present at first, only gradually attains to "consciousness and self-consciousness and so to the revelation and reality of its perfect nature, its nature [*Wesen*] as it is in and for itself"—a position which, as we may see presently, carries important consequences. It has to be remembered too that Hegel, as we have already seen, makes a point of insisting that the plan or principle or end of history needs means and instruments in order to its determinate realisation and is in itself only 'general, abstract, not completely real.'

But at this juncture some disciple of Hegel may refer us back to the *Logic* for the true meaning of teleology. There Hegel tells us "we may say that in teleological activity the end is the beginning, the consequence is the ground, the effect is the cause, a case of becoming is a case of what has become, in it only what is already existing comes into existence, and so forth<sup>1</sup>." Afterwards, in the corresponding section of the so-called *Smaller Logic*, he expresses himself still more strongly. "As a matter of fact," he here says, "the object is potentially [*an sich*] the notion; and so when the notion, as end, is realised in the object, this is only the manifestation of the inner nature of the object itself. Objectivity is thus, as it were, only a covering under which the notion lies concealed....The consummation of the infinite End, therefore, consists merely in setting aside (*aufheben*) the illusion [which makes it seem] as if the end was

<sup>1</sup> *Logik*, III. p. 228.

not yet accomplished. It is under this illusion that we live, and at the same time it is this illusion alone that stirs us to activity [*das Bethätigende*] and on which our interest in the world depends. The Idea in its process makes for itself that illusion—posits an Other over against itself—and its activity consists in setting this illusion aside<sup>1</sup>. The serpent with its tail in its mouth is an ancient mystic symbol, and if Hegel, like Herbert Spencer, had bethought himself of a book-plate to adorn *his* theory of evolution, doubtless it is this that he would have chosen. Moreover a devoted disciple has provided the motto:—*Serpens nisi serpentem comederit non fit draco*<sup>2</sup>. It would be needless for our purpose to spend time in discussing the validity of a position that cannot even be stated without contradicting itself: it is sufficient to observe that an illusion that embraces the whole range of experience and is declared to be the source alike of all truth in theory and all zest in practice is no illusion for us. This appeal to the *Logic* then does not help us in our search: it only confronts us once more with the problem as to the relation of the dialectic to time.

Coming back now to the historical again—which the employment of means and instruments to accomplish with much pain and labour a superhuman end, in any case implies—there is only the *Philosophy of Nature* left. In Nature, from or in which the world's

<sup>1</sup> *Encyclopædie*, I. § 212. In the phrase 'sets an Other over against itself,'—*setzt ein Anderer sich gegenüber*, Hegel, like Fichte before him, seems to be trying to read his own philosophy in the German word for object, i.e. *Gegenstand*.

<sup>2</sup> J. E. Erdmann, *Geschichte der neueren Philosophie*, Bd III. Abth. II. p. 841.

process begins, can we find the guiding executive whose working consummates itself in the fulness of time? But if it be true that even in the realm of mind the world-spirit works at first underground like a mole, to use Hegel's own simile, and only at length emerges into consciousness and self-consciousness, surely we cannot expect to find it enacting the part of a supreme and intelligent director in Nature, where contingency runs riot like a bacchantic god and its impotence sets limits to philosophy, which that cannot overcome<sup>1</sup>. In his explication of the notion of mind Hegel begins: "Mind has *for us* Nature as its *pre-supposition*, the *truth* of which and so the *absolute first* of which it [nevertheless] is." Again, speaking of its development, he says: "Mind is preceded not only by the logical Idea but also by external Nature. For the *knowledge* already involved in the *logical* idea is only the notion of knowledge that we think, not the knowledge that is there for itself, not actual mind but merely its possibility. The actual mind, which alone is our object-matter in the science of mind, has Nature for its proximate, as it has the logical Idea for its primary, presupposition<sup>2</sup>." This very oracular language is another instance of the seemingly double-dealing of Hegel's circular theory of development, and once again we must claim to distinguish sharply between the dialectical development—where "the Idea thought in its repose is indeed timeless"—and the historical development, where the Idea as concrete appears to be "not at rest but an existence progressing in time<sup>3</sup>." What

<sup>1</sup> Cf above, p 140.

<sup>2</sup> *Philosophy of Mind*, § 381.

<sup>3</sup> Cf *Geschichte der Philosophie*, I. p. 46.



Hegel's explication comes to then seems to be this: Nature is 'Mind out of itself' from the abstract standpoint of the Logic; but it is Mind not yet 'come to itself' from the concrete point of view of historical development. Seeing that in the Logic we have not actual mind, not knowledge but only its possibility, it may well be questioned whether this mere possibility can become actual by passing out of itself: it may even be doubted whether mind out of itself can be called mind at all. No wonder, then, that thinkers largely in sympathy with Hegel—as, for example, von Hartmann, and still more, Volkelt—regarded his system as really a philosophy of the unconscious; or that others, trained in the Hegelian school, like Strauss and Feuerbach, resolved it into a refined naturalism. From such constructions there seems to be no escape unless we take Hegel's unconscious nature in the Leibnizian or pluralistic fashion. And the continuity of the Hegelian historical evolution, which we have already noted, may be held to favour such an interpretation.

No doubt the objection will at once occur, that for Hegel Nature is *essentially* a unity that only *appears* as a plurality. But is that after all so clear as at first sight it seems—assuming, of course, that we ignore the desperate leap from the Logic to Nature, in other words disallow any continuity between the dialectical and the historical evolution? Not only does the contingency of Nature imply plurality, as already said, but Hegel repeatedly lays emphatic stress on what he calls the externality (*Aussereinander*) of Nature, not simply in relation to mind, but to itself; and on

its infinite separation (*Vereinzelung*) where the unity of form is still ideal, potential, and therefore still to seek, Nature remaining meanwhile an 'unresolved contradiction.' "Its differences...", he says, "are existences more or less independent of each other; through their original unity indeed they stand in relation with one another, so that no one is conceivable without the rest; but this relation is for them in a higher or lower degree external<sup>1</sup>." Even when he has advanced so far as the *Philosophy of Mind* he represents the soul as at first only natural, not yet sentient or actual; and *à propos* of this earliest stage he remarks:—"As the light breaks up into an infinite multitude of stars, so also the general Nature-soul breaks up into an infinite multitude of individual souls; only with this difference, that, whereas the light has the appearance of existing independently of the stars, the general Nature-soul attains to actual existence only in the separate souls<sup>2</sup>." This comes very near to presentationism or the 'mind-dust theory' and would more than satisfy the pluralists of our day.

So far we have been considering Hegel's interpretation of that heterogony of ends which in common with the pluralists he recognises throughout the course of the world's history. He attributes it to what he was fond of calling 'the absolute cunning of reason' or the world-spirit in ensuring that the contingency of all things finite shall subserve its own supreme end. This end so far we have found him regarding as

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Philosophie der Natur*, §§ 247, 248, 252; *Philosophy of Mind*, § 381, Zusatz.

<sup>2</sup> *Philosophy of Mind*, § 390.

external to, and independent of, its instruments ; and even as directed against them, as a house is built by means of the forces of nature in order to set them at defiance. But we have been unable to find in Hegel's philosophy any evidence of this world-spirit in its rôle of superintending overruler. We have found the house in progress, but no architect ; or rather we have found the whole metaphor bursting its bounds, as Hegel would say ; for the completed house is to be the architect.

Does the house then build itself? So the pluralist would say ; in so saying, however, he refuses to regard the finite agents in history as simply means and instruments to purely alien ends. And Hegel after all does likewise : as instance, the following :—“ If now we are content to see individuals, their ends and the satisfaction of these, sacrificed, their happiness generally abandoned to the dominion of chance, to which it belongs ; if we are content to consider them in general, as falling under the category of means, still they have one side which we hesitate even in comparison with the Highest to regard only in this light... viz. their moral and religious side.” But he goes much farther, and presently continues :—“ If we speak of a means we imagine it in the first instance as only external to the end and as having no part in that. In fact, however, natural things generally, let alone what is higher,—nay, the commonest lifeless objects that are used as means—must be so constituted as to answer to the end or have something in them that they share with it. Men least of all stand in that entirely external relation as means to the end of reason...on the contrary they have a part in that end

of reason and are, just because of this, ends of themselves<sup>1</sup>." Now we must here, I think, admit that a very close approximation to the pluralist's theory of evolution is at least implied. Such approximation appears still closer when we take into account what Hegel has said *à propos* of the 'absolute cunning of reason'—how it stands aside and leaves things to interact according to their own nature; rubbing together and frustrating each other, while it never itself directly interferes—how it allows full scope to human passions and interests, paying the tribute of transient existence (*Dasein und Vergänglichkeit*) not out of itself but out of these, while it foresees the result to be not the accomplishment of our designs but of its own<sup>2</sup>. This very deistic account of an assumed spectator of the world's history, whether called reason or God or Providence—and Hegel in turn calls it all three—we may leave entirely aside, for we have been able to find it only as the culminating Idea of the dialectical development and as the goal of the historical. All that immediately interests us is the near approach that Hegel here makes to the pluralistic position, which—as we have seen—is that all the agents at work in history, from the lowest to the highest, are not primarily means to external ends, not primarily things but persons in the widest sense<sup>3</sup>; that by their mutual interaction and striving—since all seek the good—

<sup>1</sup> *Philosophie der Geschichte*, 1837, p. 33.

<sup>2</sup> *Encyclopaedie*, I. § 209.

<sup>3</sup> In saying this I have in view an interesting book written mainly from the pluralistic standpoint, which I have only just come across—*Person und Sache* by L. W. Stern, 1906.

gradually eliminate the contingency, which their comparative isolation—Hegel's primitive *Vereinzelung*—at first entails, and gradually bring about the reign of reason and right. And this position could hardly be more concisely stated than in words that are Hegel's own:—"The history of the world shows only how spirit comes gradually to the consciousness and will of the truth: this dawns upon it; [then] it discerns the chief features; eventually it attains to the full consciousness of it<sup>1</sup>." The long introduction to his *Philosophy of History* is full of similar passages which suggest not a preconceived plan steadily carried out by a single overruling mind employing passive instruments, but a living organization slowly and tentatively achieved by the long and painful efforts of generations of struggling individuals. *Der Trieb der Perfectibilität ist die Bestimmung der Menschen*, Hegel has said, and all that history shows is this *Trieb* at work.

But the unity of the whole is the last word of philosophy: "All philosophy is nothing else than the study of the determinations (*Bestimmungen*) of unity... always unity, but in such a way that this is always further determined" said Hegel. And so too says the pluralist to-day: how far the two agree about the determination we must consider in the following lectures, when we shall have to look closer into this aspect of pluralism itself.

<sup>1</sup> *Philosophie der Geschichte*, 1837, p. 51.

## LECTURE VI'I.

### THE HEGELIAN UNITY.

We have seen that there is a strong undercurrent of pluralism running through the whole of Hegel's philosophy regarded as 'the thinking consideration of *things*' in distinction from his attempted 'dialectical development of pure *thought*.' But of course every philosophy must recognise both plurality and unity in some fashion, the important question then still remains: Is the unity with Hegel, as with the pluralist, result, or is it ground and presupposition; historically is it the starting-point or is it the goal: in other words Is there a unity differentiated into a plurality or is there a plurality organized into a unity? Here again I think we shall find much to justify us in affirming the second alternative. No doubt there is something to be said on the other side; of that the disruption of the Hegelian school within five years of the master's death is sufficient evidence. The thinkers on the Hegelian right held that Hegel had taught the absolute priority of the unity as personal Creator and Providence. It is true that he had said in so many words that the content of philosophy and of religion is the same, the difference lying only in their form; the form of the one being logical (*Begriff*), that of

the other being figurative (*Vorstellung*). It is true that he had found speculative interpretations for the Christian dogmas of the Trinity, the incarnation, the atonement, and even the sacraments. Nevertheless the verdict of succeeding generations has been given almost unanimously in favour of the thinkers of the Hegelian left. But they disavowed altogether Hegel's attempt to incorporate the leading tenets of Christianity into his philosophy of absolute idealism, and maintained its essentially pantheistic structure. Indeed it would nowadays seem needless to refer to any other interpretation, were it not that the leading exponents of Hegel amongst us have been till lately members of the right. The appeal to Hegel's doctrine of the Trinity as evidence of the theistic character of his philosophy is particularly unfortunate. So long as the Christian dogma is—so to say—read into it between the lines, it might pass as such. But taken, as it ought to be, with the context of the Hegelian philosophy as a whole, the doctrine is obviously and transparently pantheistic. In place of a triple personality there is no personality at all. The Trinity is simply equated to the main triad of the Hegelian system, Logic, Nature, Spirit as severally Thesis, Antithesis and Synthesis. Let us briefly consider each in turn.

In an important and often-quoted paragraph defining the nature of Logic, Hegel concludes :—"Logic accordingly is to be understood as the system of pure reason, as the realm of pure thought. This realm is the truth as it is unveiled in and for itself. We can therefore say that this content sets God before us as he is in his eternal essence before the creation of

Nature and finite spirit<sup>1</sup>." God the Father then, or rather what Hegel describes as the Kingdom of the Father, answers to this realm of pure thought, this 'realm of shadows,' as he proceeds a few pages later to call it. All the unity we can expect to find here then is an ideal unity. But no, the orthodox Hegelian may reply, within the Kingdom of the Father we find, according to Hegel's own teaching, the generation of the Son and the procession of the Spirit: we have the archetype of all community, divine love. "In friendship, in love," Hegel himself has said, "I give up my abstract personality and by so doing win it back as concrete personality. The true in personality then is just this, to gain personality through this absorbing and being absorbed in the other." Yes, but in the case of the Trinity what exactly is this other? Had Hegel been content to leave this 'silent mystery' as he calls it still fermenting in the thoughts of men as he professed to find it, or had he been content on religious grounds to accept it as the directly revealed truth, which Christian theology proclaims it to be, we should have nothing to say. Nothing at least, unless it were to protest against a philosopher meddling with what is avowedly either mystical or 'revealed.' But he essays to explain it. "The relation of father and son is taken from organic life and is only figuratively used...and so never entirely corresponds with what ought to be expressed." Philosophy alone is competent to put the truth in adequate form and this form is the dialectic development through the moments or functions of the so-called Subjective

<sup>1</sup> *Logik*, I. p. 35.



notion, through universality and particularity to individuality. In Hegel's fearfully laboured expositions this is the only thing that stands out clearly.

The so-called Kingdom of the Father is, it is true, itself a triad within the first moment—universality; and though the notion becomes increasingly adequate and concrete as we advance, still the whole movement falls within the realm of pure thought. Even this triune God, if we like so to call it, is still without the world and so not God, as Hegel himself has said in so many words. The terms which in the course of a few pages he applies to the first person of the Trinity are conclusive so far. "The eternal Idea that is not yet posited in its reality but is itself still the abstract Idea"; "God as simply the Father is not yet the true"; "The abstract God, the Father, is the universal"; "This universal implies the complete Idea, but also only *implies* it, is only potentially Idea." In keeping with such language are the various—chiefly neo-Platonic—attempts to reach the truth, which Hegel thought deserving of recognition; in the course of which we come across such phrases, as for example, the *Ὅν*, the Abyss or Deep, that is as good as to say, what is as yet empty; the *προπάτωρ* who is a Father only mediately, the *προαρχή*, He who was before the beginning; and so on<sup>1</sup>. The 'process' within this universal Hegel describes partly in biological, partly—as we have already seen—in ethical, language, partly, that is to say, as life, partly as love. "Life," he says,

<sup>1</sup> *Philosophie der Religion*, 2te Aufl. 1840, Bd II. p. 244, Eng. trans. by Speirs and Sanderson, III. p. 30. Though references are given to this the translations in the text have been made independently.

"preserves itself, preservation means passing into difference, into the struggle with particularity, means finding itself to be distinct over against inorganic nature. Life is thus only a result, since it has generated itself; is a product that in the second place again produces: ... what is produced is already there from the beginning. The same holds true in love and love returned<sup>1</sup>." Obviously this is the figurative language appropriate to religion, which for Hegel was but one remove from art: for philosophy such forms are still inadequate. Accordingly Hegel has no sooner elaborated his comparisons than he proceeds to tone them down. For the divine life there is no external; and so here, "the process," he says, "is thus nothing but the *play* of self-preservation, of making sure of one's self<sup>2</sup>." So again, having described love as between two persons, he then characterizes the divine love, as involving "this distinction and the nullity of this distinction, a play which is not in earnest, the distinction being just posited as abolished<sup>3</sup>." In the end then we find Hegel coming back to the realm of pure thought as alone furnishing an adequate account of this process as he all along maintained. Here, he says, it is manifest "that every definite notion is this—to set itself aside (*sich selbst aufheben*), as being its own contradiction, consequently to become its own difference and to posit itself as such. And thus the Notion itself still retains this one-sidedness or finitude, that it is something subjective; the determinations, the differences are posited only as ideal, not in fact as differences. This

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.* II. p. 241, E.t. III. p. 26.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.* II. p. 241, E.t. III. p. 27.    <sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.* II. p. 227, E.t. III. p. 11.

is the Notion that objectifies itself<sup>1</sup>." But again the question recurs: What exactly is this objectification?

Passing so to the Kingdom of the Son 'we come upon the Other, Difference, the Objective, as fact and not merely as thought: this is the region of 'infinite particularity' not of 'total particularity' or universality. Here plurality precedes unity. Referring back to the Kingdom of the Father—wherein the differentiation "is only a relation of God, of the Idea to itself, only a play of love with itself, in which it never attains to the seriousness of Other-being, to separation and disunion (*Entzweiung*)"—Hegel remarks "that we have not yet got to difference in its completeness, in the form that peculiarly belongs to it (*in seiner Eigenthümlichkeit*)....In order then that difference may be, and in order that it may come to its rights, Other-being is requisite, so that what is differentiated may be Other-being as *beënt* (Seyendes)"<sup>2</sup>—to use Dr Hutchison Stirling's term. This Other, let go as something independent, is the World in general, that is Nature and finite minds. But now comes the difficulty: how are the Son and the World related? How does the playful, ideal differentiation, which amounts only to abstract difference in general, stand towards the complete and actual differentiation of a World let go in deadly earnest, in such wise 'let go' that Hegel, like Schelling, can even refer to it as *der Abfall der Idee*, wherein the Idea is 'estranged from itself'? This is again the question we raised just now: what exactly is the Other?

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.* II. p. 232, E t. III. p. 16.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.* 2nd ed II. p. 249, E.t. III. p. 35.

If we stop at the Other in the Kingdom of the Father, we have not gone far enough; but if we advance to the Other in the Kingdom of the Son, we seem to have gone too far. In the one we have merely what, stripped of all more concrete metaphors, Hegel can only describe as a movement' in the realm of pure thought: in fact, however, when we look closer, it is hard to see how we can have even this. For though it be true that every 'definite notion' implies negation, it is not easy to see why or how the 'pure notion, the notion apart from all limitation,' should imply it<sup>1</sup>. However even granting that this dialectical movement is in itself conceivable, the only point that interests us is that in it difference does not—to use Hegel's own phrase—"get its rights, the right of diversity (*Verschiedenheit*)" or plurality, as, in view of the context, we may I think render it. Now it is in the Kingdom of the Son, he tells us, that this "advance to further determination takes place: ... We thus enter into the sphere of determination, i.e. of space and the world of finite mind<sup>2</sup>." And here Hegel, as I have said, has too much on his hands. And he is far from oblivious of the fact.

<sup>1</sup> We may talk of 'subjective need' in a finite life, a finite friendship; but to suppose that the content of the 'divine notion,' the first person in the Hegelian Trinity, implies anything analogous to this must surely appear meaningless, when we recall how that content is described. Well, then, may a critic describe this "life in the categories as the most inconceivable thing in the world" (A. Drews, *Die deutsche Speculation seit Kant: das Wesen des Absoluten und die Personlichkeit Gottes*, 2te Ausg. 1895, Bd 1. p. 248). It is certainly the veriest travesty of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.* II. pp. 250 f., E.t. III. pp. 37 f.

Two very different 'movements,' or processes, are clearly implied, but Hegel feels bound to show that these two are somehow one. So he refers to them as two moments in the analysis of the Son, which are kept apart and yet both contained in Him. The difficulty is really the old one of getting across the famous 'ditch.' How much at a loss Hegel is is shown by the fact that he thinks it illuminating to refer to Jacob Boehm's description of 'the transition' between the two moments of the Son: how "the first only-begotten Lucifer imagined himself in himself, advanced to being and so fell; and how immediately the eternally Only-begotten took his place<sup>1</sup>." On the strength of this piece of utter mysticism Hegel proceeds to refer to "a state before time was when the angels, God's children, sang his praises," and then more exactly defines this 'state' as the relation of thought to its object. Apparently then not only was there a Trinity in the eternal realm of pure thought, the Kingdom of the Father, but a complete and harmonious choir of ideas as well, reminding us of Plato's ideal world. Apparently too the world in space and time was after all not 'freely let go' but, in advancing to its rights of Other-being and plurality, really revolted and fell. Without attempting to resolve this difficulty as to the *Abfall der Idee* and two Only-begotten, we may content ourselves with noticing that it furnishes Hegel with an additional reason for distinguishing the two

<sup>1</sup> This passage calls to mind Goethe's account of his early theological speculations, in *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, bk VII. He too speaks of Lucifer 'believing that he found himself in himself' and of the creation and fall that resulted.

and keeping them apart; for otherwise the false position would arise "as if," to quote his words, "*the eternal Son of the Father*, the Godhead existing objectively<sup>1</sup> for itself, were *the same* as the world; as if by that only this were to be understood<sup>2</sup>." And yet, notwithstanding all, he still maintains that the two are implicitly the same: the Idea, that is to say, is in itself the same, merely the form is different: it is only figurative thought (*Vorstellung*) that holds the two apart as two wholly diverse spheres and acts. More explicitly, Hegel's final solution of the difficulty—in spite of all that he has said about divine history as the process of self-differentiation, of God without the world not being God, and much beside—is simply to sweep away time and declare the world of finitude to be only the *ἔτερον*, limited, negative etc., that as such has no truth. Regarded from the point of view of time, "it is merely an instant (*Augenblick*), like the gleam of the lightning-flash, which in its appearing has immediately disappeared. But what we have really got to do is to get rid of every time-determination, whether duration or the now.... The world as temporal is just the region of contradiction, the Idea in a form inadequate to it<sup>3</sup>." The one Other then has two forms, one true and the other untrue; the unveiled, eternal Other of the realm of pure thought, the Kingdom of the Father, and the phenomenal, half-concealed, half-revealed Other of the Kingdom of the Son; the Other that makes no difference in the unsullied light of the divine self-identity

<sup>1</sup> But has Hegel ever made this 'objective existence' clear?

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.* II. p. 251, E.t. III. p. 39.

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.* II. p. 252, E.t. III. p. 40.

and the Other that refracts and disperses it in endless particoloured beams; God in his eternal essence and the world of infinite particularity, of subjective consciousness and ordinary thought, that is the world of experience, the historical realm of ends. \*

Now surely in all this we may say that one thing at least seems clear: what Hegel undertook to explain—the transition from the Kingdom of the Father to the Kingdom of the Son—"how this Idea passes out of its universality and infinity into finitude" proves to be inexplicable. The Kingdom of the Father, then, to which the Son as the eternally Only-begotten belongs, is thus—as I attempted to show in the second lecture—the undiscovered country from whose bourn no traveller returns. The Absolute cannot be the starting-point of real knowledge,—it may be the ultimate goal of philosophical speculation. Experience may lead us to frame the idea of the Absolute, but it will not enable us to deduce the world of the Many from it. Among the opening sentences of his exposition of the Kingdom of the Son, Hegel has the following which comes near to admitting the truth of all this:—"First there was the Idea in the element of thought: this is the foundation and with it we have begun; [for] the Universal and therefore more abstract must precede [all else] in science<sup>1</sup>"; but in fact "it is the later in existence; it is the potential (*das Ansich*) but it comes later to consciousness and knowledge<sup>2</sup>." That is to say the Idea in the element of thought, to

<sup>1</sup> Hegel uses 'science' here in a Fichtean sense, that is as equivalent to philosophy.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.* II. p. 247, E.t. III. p. 33.

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which Hegel has relegated the persons of the Christian Trinity, lies behind existence and experience: as he goes on immediately to say, "the *form* of the Idea comes to appearance as *result*, which however is essentially *potentiality* (*das Ansich*)."<sup>1</sup> Clear in itself, such language is nevertheless not a little confusing in view of the context, that we were just now discussing, in which it occurs. For there the whole finite world of our conscious experience is declared to be illusory, inadequate, and untrue, and the movement within the realm of thought to be verily reality, truth, infinity. But there still, of course, remains the Kingdom of the Spirit, in which this estrangement of the Idea, which constitutes the inadequacy of the finite world, is finally overcome.

This estrangement is puzzling not only for the reasons we have already considered, but also in yet another respect. Thus, at the end of the *Logic*, Hegel describes the Idea as impelled to realise itself beyond the confines of pure thought and pictures it as freely but with absolute self-confidence taking the plunge into another sphere. This, as we have seen, is a difficult situation to conceive, but the result is equally bewildering. For the plunge, when made, has at once to be undone: the Idea, dissipated and out of itself, has painfully to collect itself again and rise anew to its pristine unity. Fortunately it was not let go as a whole: it is only the second element or moment, that of particularity, that answers to Nature, and the externalisation which was the work of the first moment is internalised anew through the third. This Kingdom of the Spirit we have presently to consider: I anticipate



it here because the continuation of the sentence just now quoted is somewhat clearer when this is taken into account. The whole sentence runs:—"The *form* of the Idea comes to appearance as *result*, which however is essentially *potentiality*; as the content of the Idea is such that the last is the first and the first the last, so is what appears as result, the presupposition, the potentiality, the foundation<sup>1</sup>." This is the cardinal principle of Hegel's doctrine of development, to which I have already several times referred: the end is the beginning, for the beginning is its presupposition, and out of this nothing comes but what is already there. There is a sense in which this paradox may be true and have a meaning: there is a sense in which it is not true but self-contradictory. It may be justifiable when we are dealing with essence and its explication, with a dialectical movement: it is not true of existence and of historical evolution. The plausibility—but also the falsity—of Hegel's position lay in identifying the two. Bare potentiality, the bare idea of an end to be accomplished, however sublime, however completely explicated in respect of its essential import, will never become actuality.

But is it so certain, it may be urged, that what according to Hegel philosophy places first of all is not the supreme reality? Unquestionably if we could suppose that what he meant was simply that—though we only gradually attain to a knowledge of God, yet when we do—we may believe that God is not merely the *ratio essendi*, but is also the personal creator and conserver of all, we should have less difficulty. But

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.* II. p. 247, E.t. III. p. 33.

the whole trend of his system is against such an interpretation. Now Spirit for Hegel, it will be remembered, falls into the triad of subjective, objective and absolute Spirit. In keeping with such an interpretation, then, as Lotze has remarked, "we should have expected that absolute spirit...would have returned,...only with greater depth of meaning and perfection, to the form that spirit possessed in the first stage of this development, the form that is to say of personal, individual Spirit<sup>1</sup>." But as we are aware, Hegel's Absolute Spirit, the counterpart of the Absolute Idea in the *Logic*, was something wholly different from this. What Hegel places first is then neither a single substance nor a single subject. As the latest and one of his ablest commentators, Kuno Fischer, has said, "the main theme running through the whole of his philosophy is the development of the world in accordance with reason. What is developed is rational consciousness, spirit, the self-knowledge of humanity." All actual development of course presupposes its own possibility, and it is just this that Hegel places first as potential end and aim. He declares thought and being to be identical and yet places abstract thought at the beginning and then fails to effect its union with actual being again. Let me quote another commentary: "It may be all very well to declare that the life of

<sup>1</sup> "Of course," Lotze adds, "we could then properly regard the whole series of philosophical notions, that were to lead up to this climax, not as furnishing a history of the development of God himself, but only as the history of our ideas concerning his nature. In so far as this interpretation of it is impossible the dialectical exposition must be changed." *Geschichte der deutschen Philosophie seit Kant*, 1882, pp. 71 f.

God and the divine knowledge is a play of love with itself; [but] such an idea sinks to the devotional or even to insipidity, if the seriousness, the pain, the patience and labour, of the negative are lacking in it. *In itself* that life, it may be, is undisturbed harmony and unity with itself, in which there is no concern about other-being and its estrangement, and as little about overcoming this estrangement. But this [life] *in itself* (*dies Ansich*) is abstract universality, wherein its nature, to be *for itself*, is ignored." But 'nature,' let me parenthetically remark, implies process. This commentary is Hegel's own, and occurs in one of the very last paragraphs that he revised for the press. After another sentence or two he continues: "The true is the whole. The whole however is only the essence completing itself through its own development. Of the Absolute it is to be said that it is essentially *result*, that not till the *end* is it what it is in truth....What though the embryo be *potentially* man, it is still not *actually* so: it is that only as matured reason, which has *made* itself to what it is potentially<sup>1</sup>." The true inwardness of Hegel's paradox that the Idea must first make itself to what it is, that its end was its aim from the beginning, so that like the circle it only completes itself in returning into itself—should now be clear.

The difference between the actual and the potential is regarded not as a difference of existence but as what Hegel somewhat oddly terms a difference of form. Here is an example that he gives: "The man who is

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Phaenomenologie*, pp. 15—17. Prof. Baillie's translation 1. pp. 16 ff.

potentially rational has advanced no further when he is actually rational. The potentiality (*das Ansich*) is conserved and yet the difference is quite enormous. No new content has emerged, yet the form is an enormous difference. On *this* difference all the difference in the world's history turns<sup>1</sup>. This reminds us of his former allegory of the house: it is as if one said, the house and the plan of it are logically the same. When we have both we have a difference of form, or what he calls a duplication: we have the plan and the plan out of itself. But suppose the house became self-conscious: it would, Hegel assumes, in that case recognise the identity between itself and its plan: the duplication would yield to identity, and the end coincide with the beginning. Yes, logically or ideally perhaps; but still there is 'the enormous difference.' A conjuror throws up a picture and it comes down a watch: how are we going to account for that, especially how, if we have no conjuror? But in truth it turns out that it is after all not a plan, a picture or an idea with which we begin, but a germ and an impulse. "The potentiality determines the course of the development"—so we say after the event—but it does not provide the motive. There is besides an impulse towards self-development, something "that cannot endure to be only potential": this is 'the germ' that is thus already partly actual. "The impulse," says Hegel, "is the contradiction, that it [the germ] is only potential and yet ought not to be so. The impulse puts forth into existence<sup>2</sup>." This is the point where Hegel essays to ford his ditch: the impulse in historical development

<sup>1</sup> *Geschichte der Philosophie*, 1833, I. p. 34.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 35.

and the contradiction in dialectical development are identified; and the former, as temporal and phenomenal, is, as much as may be, suppressed.

To recognise this 'monstrous' ὕστερον πρότερον, as Schopenhauer called it, of Hegel's panlogism is to recognise that in his zeal for thoroughness he overreached himself. In order to make doubly sure of his foundation, and start without presuppositions he sundered what he could not afterwards unite. The unity which he places at the beginning, so far from being suppositionless, is but 'the shadow' of the unity that by means of the historical method he reaches in the end—the slowly and painfully achieved unity that rests on plurality. The so-called transition to the Kingdom of the Son, from the Idea to Nature, turns out to be no veritable transition at all, to be not the spiritual in alienation from itself, but the spiritual at the outset of its development. The Kingdom of the Spirit is not the return of finite spirits to the eternal Father from whom they have wandered nor to the universal source whence they emanated: it is simply the advance of humanity towards an absolute consciousness of its own unity. Passages in support of this assertion might be quoted from all parts of Hegel's works. Here are some: "The consciousness of finite spirit is concrete being, the material for the realisation of the notion of God<sup>1</sup>." Again, "In the higher speculative consideration it (Spirit) is *the absolute Spirit itself*, which in order to be for itself the knowledge of itself, differentiates itself *in itself*, and thereby posits the finiteness of spirit, within which it becomes the

<sup>1</sup> *Philosophie der Religion*, 2te Auf. II. p. 551, E.t. III. p. 365.

absolute object of the knowledge of itself. Thus it is the absolute Spirit in its community (or church),—the actual Absolute as Spirit and knowledge of itself<sup>1</sup>." Again, "God is God only in so far as He knows himself:• his self-knowledge is, further, his self-consciousness in man, and man's knowledge of God which proceeds to man's self-knowledge *in* God<sup>2</sup>." Once more, contrasting religious faith with historical evidence, he says of the former: "This rather than that is the rise of the community, is the community itself, the existing Spirit, the Spirit in its existence, God existing as community." And a sentence or two later on, in referring to the three persons of the Trinity:—"The first was the Idea in its simple universality for itself....The second was the Idea in its externality, so that the external phenomenon is brought back to the first, is known as divine Idea—the identity of the human and divine. The third is this consciousness, God as *Spirit*, and this Spirit as existing in the community<sup>3</sup>." Finally, "God is infinite, Ego finite: these are false, objectionable expressions, forms that are inappropriate to the Idea, to the nature of the fact....God is the movement to the finite...in the Ego, as that which is annulling itself as finite, God returns to himself, and only as this return is He God. Without the world God is not God<sup>4</sup>." The full significance of these and many more passages of like import<sup>5</sup> only

<sup>1</sup> *Ästhetik*, I. p. 122.      <sup>2</sup> *Philosophy of Mind*. Encycl. III. § 564.

<sup>3</sup> *Philosophie der Religion*, 1ste Auf., 1832, II. p. 261.

<sup>4</sup> *Op. cit.* 2te Auf. I. p. 194, Eng. trans. I. p. 200.

<sup>5</sup> Several of which will be found in Drews' *Deutsche Speculation u.s.w.*, vol. I. pp. 260 ff. and in McTaggart's *Studies in the Hegelian Cosmology*, pp. 208 ff.

becomes apparent when we remember that, according to Hegel, God before this realisation in the finite, this existence as the community, this self-consciousness in man, this return to Himself, is only this very result ideally regarded as its own presupposition. God comes to consciousness only in humanity, and otherwise is not God, not Spirit, but only Idea. But an Idea is not conscious, though it implies consciousness: hence God as Idea is either the unconscious, as Schopenhauer and von Hartmann maintained, or an abstract essence that 'comes later to existence,' as Hegel himself by turns concedes and denies as he alternates between the historical and the dialectical.

But much more impressive than any string of quotations is the whole drift of Hegel's *Philosophy of Religion* and especially of the long section devoted to the so-called Kingdom of the Spirit. In the latter referring to the divinity of Christ he says it is "clear that the *Community* of itself produces this faith.... Whereas grateful peoples have placed their benefactors only among the stars, the Spirit has recognised subjectivity as an absolute moment of the divine nature. The person of Christ has been decreed by the Church to be the Son of God<sup>1</sup>." Miracles, the *words* of the Bible, Councils and such like have nothing to do with it. "The true Christian content of faith is to be justified by philosophy, not by history." Not by history as ordinarily understood Hegel means, but taking the philosophy of history in its widest sense, then by that and nothing else. It is all 'divine history,' 'development in conformity with reason,'

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.* II. p. 328, Eng. trans. III. p. 121.

Hegel affirms. Yes, but chequered and distorted by contingency to an indefinite extent, emerging gradually out of superstition and phantasy, out of sorrow and disappointment. "The sorrow of the world," he has said, "was the birth-place of the impulse of Spirit to know God as spiritual in universal form and stripped of finitude. This want was begotten through the progress of history and the development of the world-spirit." Hercules was deified by the Greeks, the Roman Emperor was revered as God; and Christ was decreed to be the Son of God only by the same effort of Spirit as that which lies at the basis of those earlier forms and can be recognised as present in them. "Out of the ferment of finitude as it changes into foam Spirit exhales its fragrance<sup>1</sup>."

When we pass from Hegel's *Philosophy of Religion* to the *Phenomenology of Spirit* we find there a record of the same gradual process and the same ultimate result—an account which runs closely on all fours with that which the pluralist would give. It starts with mere sentient experience, which advances towards self-consciousness, as the subject, in shaping and controlling its environment, realises its own independence as an agent. Finally it reaches the stage of reason, as such incipiently self-conscious agents enter into social relations and become fully self-conscious; then too they develop a system of law and order and also begin to realise the spiritual world of art, religion and philosophy. I know of no better summary of this wonderful but terribly intricate work than the following given by Windelband in his *History of Modern*

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.* 2nd ed. II. p. 330, Eng. trans. III. 124.



*Philosophy*:—"Hegel's aim is to...build up the whole of philosophy out of the continuity shewn in the historical development of the human mind. Man's self-consciousness is the world-spirit that has come to itself. The evolution of the human mind is the conscious self-apprehension of the world-mind, and the essence of things is to be understood from the process which the human mind has passed through in order to grasp its own organization and thereby the organization of the universe itself. The Hegelian philosophy regards itself as the self-consciousness of the entire development of the culture attained by the reason of the human race, and in this it sees at the same time the self-consciousness of the Absolute Spirit as it unfolds itself in the world. Thus this philosophy becomes on the one side a thoroughly historical view of the world (*Weltanschauung*) but on the other lapses over into a completely anthropocentric speculation about the world (*Weltbetrachtung*), that is to say, it looks upon the development of the human spirit as the development of the 'world-spirit'<sup>1</sup>."

In the light of this summary the famous sentences with which Hegel concludes his *Phenomenology* become more or less clear:—"The way to the goal, absolute knowledge, or spirit knowing itself as spirit, lies in the memory of minds"—the solidarity of heredity and tradition, I suppose we might say—"as they are in themselves and as they accomplish the organization of their realm. Their conservation on the side of their free existence manifesting itself in the form of contingency is History, but on the side of their organization in notional

<sup>1</sup> *Geschichte der neueren Philosophie*, 4te Aufl. 1907, II. p. 329.

form (*begreifenen*) it is Science manifesting itself as knowledge. Both together, *history in notional form*, constitute the memory and the Golgotha of the Absolute Spirit, the actuality, truth and certainty of his throne, without which he would be the lifeless Solitary; only

‘From the chalice of this spirit realm  
Sparkles his Infinitude’<sup>1</sup>.”

The reference to Calvary recalls the negative element, the sorrow of the world that spiritualises it, on which Hegel had previously dwelt. With this we may compare a similar passage giving the ‘result’ of the *History of Philosophy*:—“The struggle of the finite self-consciousness with the absolute self-consciousness, which appeared for that to be beyond it, ceases. [For] the finite self-consciousness has ceased to be finite; and thereby on the other hand the absolute self-consciousness has acquired the actuality, which it previously lacked. In general the entire history of the world so far, and in particular the history of philosophy, is simply the exhibition of this struggle. And now they seem to have reached their goal, where the absolute self-consciousness, of which they had a presentation (*Vorstellung*), has ceased to be something foreign, where, that is to say, the spirit as spirit is actual....The Spirit produces itself as Nature, [and] as Society (*Staat*). The former is its unconscious action,...in the deeds and life of history as also [in the works] of art it brings itself forth consciously,...but only in science”—i.e. in philosophy—“does it know itself as absolute spirit, and this knowledge alone is spirit, is its veritable existence”<sup>2</sup>.”

<sup>1</sup> An inaccurate quotation from Schiller’s poem *Die Freundschaft*.<sup>W</sup>

<sup>2</sup> *Geschichte der Philosophie*, III. pp. 689 f.

Everywhere, then, in all his works, Hegel reaches unity as the result of a development, and everywhere emphatically declares it to be a result. Surely therefore it is reasonable to believe that he means what he says. When, however, he adds that this result is itself the beginning, he does not say what he means. What he means is itself result—the speculative inversion of the concrete development in the mirror of the so-called Logic: he himself compares it to standing on your head'. Even the Absolute Idea itself is so far a result that the notion of it is described as 'an object in which all differentiations have coalesced'.<sup>1</sup> As to the actual unity that is its correlative—in spite of occasional passages in which Hegel refers to it as 'having personality,' it can hardly be called a person in the strict sense. This, I think, is evident from Hegel's account of the State or Society. Much the same language as he used in describing the religious community is repeated here. The state is "the ethical spirit, the substantial will that thinks itself and knows and what it knows accomplishes"; "it is the spirit that is stationed in the world and there consciously realises itself, whereas in Nature it is only actualised as its own Other, as sleeping spirit." He even calls the idea of the state 'the actual God'.<sup>2</sup> But we have still to see how far Hegel's actual unity is from deserving the title Absolute; and this will bring us round again to Pluralism, in which there is the same shortcoming.

<sup>1</sup> *Phaenomenologie*, p. 21; E. t. p. 24.      <sup>2</sup> *Encyclopaedie*, § 236.

<sup>3</sup> *Philosophie des Rechtes*, 1ste Aufl. § 257, pp. 312, 318, 320.

## LECTURE IX.

### THE LIMITS OF PLURALISM.

What after all, we have now to ask, was Hegel's actual unity? It was entirely geocentric and anthropocentric. The earth, he says, is the truth of the solar system, just as animal nature is the truth of the vegetable, and this the truth of the mineral. The earth is *the* planet: the sun has neither produced it nor thrown it off; but sun, moon, comets, and stars are only conditions for the earth (*Bedingungen der Erde*) which they serve. Among the continents of the earth, Europe, in virtue of its physical characteristics, forms its consciousness, its rational part, and the centre of Europe is Germany<sup>1</sup>. With his own philosophy, he had the sublime assurance to think, the history of philosophy closes; and in the restoration of Prussia under Stein he thought the culmination of the world's history was attained. It is however not so much this unique anticlimax that now concerns us; but rather the general position that there are not 'more worlds than ours,' which Hegel shared with the fifteenth century ecclesiastics. They, it will be remembered, had burned Giordano Bruno alive, who was one of the first in modern times to proclaim this doctrine; and

<sup>1</sup> *Encyclopaedie*, §§ 249, 280, 339.

they regarded even Columbus as verging on heresy. "As the planet, the *earth* is the body of *individual* totality...its characteristic as organic is to digest the entirely general astral powers, which as heavenly bodies have the illusory appearance of independence, and to bring them under the control of its individuality, in which these Titanic members sink to moments.... From a quantitative standpoint one may regard the earth as 'a drop in the sea of the infinite,' but magnitude is a very external determination." The earth "is our home, not as physical, but as the home of spirit<sup>1</sup>."

This seems to be about all that Hegel had to say concerning the existence of a plurality of worlds. He appears never to have thought seriously of controverting it: it was too completely beyond his purview for that. The question:—To what end then all the rest of the universe? which vexed the soul of old Böhme—why, Höffding asks, did it never trouble Hegel? His contempt for Nature was too extreme, we reply: the man who compared the starry heavens to a 'light-rash' or 'a swarm of flies' was hardly likely to have troubled his head further about them. Had he done so, facing the facts with an open mind and without *parti pris*, he would have found the realisation of the Absolute Idea as the Kingdom of the Spirit a far more serious problem than from his purely geocentric and anthropocentric standpoint it proved to be. It would have been impossible then to call the earth '*the* home of spirit' *par excellence*. Now this is precisely the problem with which pluralism is on one side confronted. So far as our experience goes we seem unable to

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.* § 280.

conceive how a plurality of worlds can ever become a single Realm of Ends, such as might fitly be called absolute.

But the plurality of worlds seems not only to stand in the way of that complete consummation of the will towards a higher unity, which is the pluralist's ideal: it also presents difficulties for the Christian theologian. The continuity between natural and moral evil is so close that it can hardly be seriously maintained that the advance from a state of merely animal innocence to a 'knowledge of good and evil' has not frequently, perhaps invariably, entailed actual sin and error and misery. If so, then for other worlds as for ours, what Hegel has called a 'Golgotha' would be essential; and thus, if we are not to charge God with the arbitrary partiality of an 'oriental potentate, we seem driven to assume that 'the plan of salvation,' the divine progress from the manger to the cross, has been reenacted in worlds innumerable. Sir David Brewster apparently was prepared, if need be, to assume this; but theologians, so far as I know, have been less presumptuous. Two other alternatives then present themselves. The existence of a plurality of worlds might be simply denied, as it was by John Wesley, by Whewell—in his famous anonymous essay—and as it has been denied again recently by Dr Alfred Russel Wallace. Both these later writers rely mainly on a use of the argument from probabilities, which seems clearly fallacious. If a given effect can only result from the cooperation of a single group of independent causes we may proceed to inquire about the probability of their concurrence elsewhere; but if the given effect

can result in manifold other ways, then the absence of all the conditions present in a given case proves nothing. It may be true that a fauna and a flora analogous to ours are possible nowhere else, that human beings could only exist on this one planet. But metabolism, stimulation, and spontaneous direction may be possible in a protoplasm very different from that with which we are familiar, and evolution might progress indefinitely on quite other lines than those that have obtained for us<sup>1</sup>. Viewed from such more general standpoint the probability is not against, but enormously in favour of, a plurality of worlds, as men of science almost unanimously allow. We come then to the other alternative.

Granted that in the one universe there are many worlds, the Christian theologian has the strongest grounds for believing that they are spiritually and historically, and not merely physically, interconnected. It was 'the infidel Tom Paine,' a quondam Quaker, who first made the plurality of worlds a serious stumbling-block for Christian believers by his once famous work, the *Age of Reason*. To meet his objections without denying his premises, Andrew Fuller and afterwards Chalmers—mainly on the strength of isolated texts from the Old and the New Testament—sought to establish "the position," as the latter puts it, "that the history of our redemption is known in other and distant places of creation, and is matter of deep interest and feeling amongst other orders of

<sup>1</sup> The protoplasm of our planet has determined once for all the possible foods and the possible senses of all its organisms; but quite other protoplasms are perfectly conceivable.

created intelligences<sup>1</sup>." The nature of such a connexion is the problem that pluralism in our day has to consider. We may call it the upper limit of pluralism.

It seems obvious that unless some supreme spiritual unity is found the universe will remain in the highest sense an absolute plurality, if such a term is allowable. Such a universe would be a merely sporadic manifold of realms of ends having a common physical basis but devoid of all teleological continuity; like so many village communities without a supreme federation, geographically neighbours but strangers politically. As society lifts the individual to a higher level, so we feel that a supreme unity would increase the worth of this universe both intellectually and morally. Such a unity is an ideal that we feel ought to be real. Can we conceive it more definitely or find any evidence of its existence? The theological writers—as the words just quoted from Chalmers show—rely on the Christian doctrine of a hierarchy of angels to render the connexion of a multitude of otherwise isolated worlds intelligible. Angels are to be regarded not only as the ministers of Providence but as spectators of universal history. Such a conception is entirely in keeping with the general standpoint of pluralism, as I have tried to describe it. The principle of continuity indeed almost forces us to posit higher orders of intelligence than our own; and the fact<sup>2</sup> that *we* are able to control and modify the course of evolution suggests that if there are higher intelligences they can exercise this power in a still higher degree.

<sup>1</sup> *Christian Revelation in connexion with Astronomy*, Disc. iv. 1st edn, p. 145.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Lecture v. p. 111.



This latter possible function of intelligences of a higher order does not directly concern our main problem, that of an ultimate and supreme unity; but it bears on it indirectly, in so far as any evidence of such control would be evidence of the existence of those superior beings; and their existence again would strengthen the assumption of a still higher unity in the plurality of worlds. Is there then we may inquire any evidence of this sort? Evidence, I mean, of a purely objective and scientific kind, not merely evidence which could satisfy only persons with certain subjective convictions lying outside the purview of science proper. For on the lines of our present inquiry it might be held that we cannot fairly appeal, for example, to the specially Christian evidences in support of theophanies, incarnation, inspiration and the like. At the same time it should not be forgotten that spiritualistic pluralism, unlike naturalism, can have no *a priori* objection to the 'supernatural' in this sense<sup>1</sup>.

We have an instance of the sort of evidence we are seeking in Dr Russel Wallace's arguments, already

<sup>1</sup> These remarks will of course suggest to everybody a topic which is in fact fundamental to the whole subject we are considering—the question, namely, of religious faith and religious experience. Such an experience implies a consciousness of the presence of a higher spiritual being—a consciousness which is wholly distinct from the belief in other selves which we reach by the ejective interpretation of what is externally presented. It is in such wise that to earnestly religious minds 'the evidence of things unseen' is certain, immediate and practically verified. For them the problem of the unity of the many is already essentially solved. But their certainty after all is primarily subjective: it is faith, not knowledge. It cannot compel assent on purely scientific or merely speculative grounds. Hence I think we do well to follow Kant's example and for the present to leave it aside."

noted in an earlier lecture, to show that man's appearance on the earth is due to such supernatural interference. After enumerating a number of human characteristics, such as naked skin, a brain largely in excess of animal needs, musical voice, moral sense, etc., he proceeds :—  
“The inference I would draw from this class of phenomena is, that a superior intelligence has guided the development of man in a definite direction, and for a special purpose, just as man guides the development of many animal and vegetable forms. The laws of evolution alone would, perhaps, never have produced a grain so well adapted to man's use as wheat and maize ; such fruits as the seedless banana and bread-fruit ; or such animals as the Guernsey milch cow, or the London dray-horse. Yet these so closely resemble the unaided productions of nature, that we may well imagine a being who had mastered the laws of development of organic forms through past ages, refusing to believe that any new power had been concerned in their production, and scornfully rejecting the theory...that in these few cases a controlling intelligence had directed the action of the laws of variation, multiplication, and survival for its own purposes. We know, however, that this has been done ; and we must therefore admit the possibility that, if we are not the highest intelligences in the universe, some higher intelligence may have directed the process by which the human race was developed, by means of more subtle agencies than we are acquainted with.”  
In a note he adds :—“Angels and archangels...have been so long banished from our belief as to have become actually unthinkable as actual existences, and

nothing in modern philosophy takes their place. Yet 'the grand law of 'continuity,' the last outcome of modern science...cannot surely fail to be true beyond the narrow sphere of our vision, and leave such an infinite chasm between man and the great Mind of the universe. Such a supposition seems...in the highest degree improbable'.<sup>1</sup> As I have already said<sup>2</sup> there is no denying the formal soundness of this reasoning, even if we hesitate to go further. It at least serves to set the continuity argument in a telling light.

A similar, if less impressive argument is perhaps to be found in the prodigality in nature of beautiful colours and forms, which natural selection on grounds of bare utility seems altogether unable to explain. Take for example the gorgeous coloration of humming-birds or the so-called 'ball and socket' ornament in the secondary wing-feathers of the Argus pheasant<sup>3</sup>. In reply to the late Duke of Argyll<sup>4</sup>, one of the few writers who have dwelt at any length on this particular 'mystery of creation,' Darwin admitted that natural selection was powerless to account for such facts, but he thought that sexual selection would suffice. Dr Wallace, who at first agreed with him in this, has since recanted; and now, I take it, he would agree rather with the Duke of Argyll that "love of beauty is equally

<sup>1</sup> *Natural Selection and Tropical Nature*, 1891, pp. 204 f.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Lect. iv. p. 91.

<sup>3</sup> Of Tennyson his friend Edward Fitzgerald relates that "picking up a daisy as we walked and looking close to its crimson-tipt leaves he said: 'Does not this look like a thinking Artificer, one who wishes to ornament?'" *In Memoriam*, A. W. Robinson's excellent edition, p. 255.

<sup>4</sup> *Reign of Law*, 1st edn, p. 236.

a purpose which we see fulfilled in Nature," and so implies some superior control. At any rate he concludes his chapter on the colour-sense by saying:—"The emotions excited by colour and by music alike seem to rise above the level of a world developed on purely utilitarian principles<sup>1</sup>." This whole subject of what we might call Natural Aesthetics seems to be a fruitful field of inquiry that, so far as I know, has been strangely neglected<sup>2</sup>. The subject no doubt is beset with difficulties, and there are many *pros* and *cons* to weigh before the intervention of such superior and disinterested principles can be maintained with any confidence. Still, if their presence were credibly ascertained it would add greatly to the antecedent probability that, to repeat Dr Wallace's words, "the grand law of continuity cannot fail to be true beyond the narrow sphere of our vision."

This 'grand law' then encourages the pluralist to assume, though lacking sufficient direct evidence, that there exist individuals of a higher order, or rather a hierarchy of such orders—a speculative view with which Leibniz and Fechner have made us all familiar. But human beings owe their pre-eminence on this planet to social organization, which we regard as not merely an aggregate but as an over-individual unity. The law of continuity then would seem to suggest that individuals of a higher order in like manner are organized into over-individual unities, and so on—possibly *ad indefinitum*. This view would thus lead

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 415.

<sup>2</sup> August Pauly is an exception. Cf. his *Darwinismus und Lamarckismus*, 1905, pp. 272 ff.

up to a society rather than to a person as the Supreme Unity of all. But apart from other difficulties that we shall have presently to consider—it might readily be brought into line with the Christian doctrine of a tri-personal God. The objections that have recently been brought against theism by Dr McTaggart—from the standpoint of what may fairly be called a Hegelian pluralism—might perhaps in this way be met. It is noteworthy that it is the theologians who have been most influenced by Hegel, who insist the most on what is technically called the ‘essential trinity’ (τρόπος ὑπάρξεως) of the divine nature in opposition to the Sabellian heresy of an ‘undifferentiated unity,’ which only assumed a triple form in its revelation to mankind, a so-called ‘economic trinity’ (τρόπος ἀποκαλύψεως). Thus Martensen in his *Christian Dogmatics* writes:—“Without the Son the Father could not speak of himself as I, for the first-personal form, apart from an objectivity distinct from the Ego (a not-I, a Thou), is unthinkable.” “When then,” he remarks, “we teach with the Church the eternal preexistence and independence of creation not only of the Father but also of the Son and the Spirit, we thereby affirm that God, in order to be the self-revealing, self-loving God, must eternally differentiate himself into I and Thou, and just as eternally unite himself with himself as the Spirit of love that proceeds from the relation of contrast<sup>1</sup>.” At the same time there is no logical incompatibility between pluralism and the assumption of a single personality as the Supreme Spirit of the world. In fact Leibniz refers to God in this wise as *la monade*

<sup>1</sup> *Christliche Dogmatik*, §§ 56, 55.

*primitive*, a phrase which is precisely equivalent to the *Monas monadum*, which Giordano Bruno and others had previously used.

But as I have already observed<sup>1</sup>, such supreme unity, whether triune or not, could from the pluralistic standpoint be regarded only as supreme, only as *prima inter pares*, not as absolute. A supreme monad or society, that is to say, would necessarily imply a certain relativity and limitation consequent on the existence of other monads and societies also possessing some spontaneity and initiative. For a strict and absolute pluralism moreover such limitation would not be self-imposed; not an act of will on the part of one supreme being but an actual characteristic of the nature of things, of the absolute whole consisting of such Supreme and the rest of the world. The ordinary notion of creation—viz. that at a given moment there was no world and at a subsequent moment the world was there—is rejected as having no sort of analogy with experience, and as therefore unthinkable. On the other hand the notion of creation as eternal and continuous seems to involve an essential implication of God and the world—limitation on the one side, dependence on the other. But these relations hold good also of the finite spirit. The world is the object of my experience: in Leibnizian language it is mirrored in my experience from that unique standpoint which makes me what I am as regards capacity and opportunity. The world limits me in manifold ways, but it is also dependent upon me. For I am not wholly passive and inert: I am able to react upon it and do

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Lecture II. p. 29.

in fact in some measure modify it: apart from me it would not be all in all just what it is. On the strength of the principle of continuity then the pluralist would assume the like to hold good of the highest. The world is the object of God's experience; God is the subject that *has* this experience, not the abstract totality in which the distinction of subject and object disappears. Like every other spirit God must have his unique standpoint; but it is unique in a quite special way: it is the highest.

But if now, as theism commonly does, we regard this highest as infinitely transcending ourselves, we should be prepared to find such difference of degree really amounting to a difference of kind. Take, for example, a circle: its circumference, a curved line, meets a diameter, a straight line, at two equidistant points and bears to this the ratio commonly represented by the Greek letter  $\pi$ . If however we let the diameter become infinite, the circumference ceases to be curved; and if now, from one extremity of the diameter we imagine three bodies travelling; one along the diameter itself and the two others in opposite directions along the circumference to its other extremity; then the further they go the further they will be apart, although, if we are dealing with a circle, we must also imagine all three eventually meeting. But in truth we are no longer dealing with a circle but with something generically distinct, that is to say with the limit towards which we approach—but which we never attain—when the diameter of the circle increases indefinitely. We regard the circle as a closed figure, but in passing to the limit in this wise we leave definite enclosure

behind us. Now what we have to note is that whereas the theist passes beyond the series, the pluralist remains within it. Both may recognise a Supreme Being surpassing all our powers of conception; but for the theist the superlative is absolute and transcendent, for the pluralist it is relative and immanent. When the theist says that man is made in the image of God and then proceeds to describe God as infinite and absolute, it needs but a very slight acquaintance with the meaning of these attributes to realise that both statements cannot be literally true. For the pluralist on the other hand, if there be a Supreme Spirit at all, as he may reasonably suppose, that Spirit is still genuinely a member of the realm of ends, albeit the highest and, so to say, the central member<sup>1</sup>.

But there is still a further mark of relativity clinging to any ideal of the Supreme Spirit that pluralism can entertain, which must ever distinguish this ideal within the realm of spirits from the unconditional Absolute of so-called philosophical theism. For the standpoint of the pluralist is historical: he contemplates the world exclusively as a world of life and experience and

<sup>1</sup> As such there must be attributed to Him powers and capacities that would not be adequately represented if we attempted to combine and magnify indefinitely the powers and capacities of the most exalted human beings just as, for example, our human nature would not be adequately represented if we imagined the social ascidian, one of the earliest progenitors that the zoologist assigns to us, picturing a human being as a sort of social ascidian *in excelsis*. In particular it would, I think, be reasonable to suppose, as I have already remarked, that mutual communication between this Supreme Spirit and ourselves—and even between other superior beings and ourselves—would be possible of a more immediate, so to say more internal nature, than that which alone holds between ourselves and our fellow men.



therefore of process and change or, as we are wont to say, under the form of time not under that of eternity<sup>1</sup>. As immanent in this world God must, it would seem, so far be conceived as subject to its fundamental conditions. Conformably with what I said just now, 'we may suppose his time-span to exceed ours indefinitely, we may credit him with thoughts that are intuitive and adequate where ours are only discursive and symbolic: he may know all truth *sub specie aeternitatis*. But all this is hardly life. As the World Spirit *par excellence*, interested and active throughout the universe, how can he be a living God wholly apart from the world's evolution and history? Even if philosophical speculation after many vain attempts should at length succeed in explaining time as in some way 'the moving image of eternity,' as Plato poetically expressed it, still this would not alter the case. *Mutatis mutandis*, unless the world of experience were reduced to an impossible illusion, the relations temporally prefigured would still remain and have a meaning. A Supreme Spirit confronted and conditioned by free agents certainly does not correspond to the notion usually entertained of the Deity. Such a 'finite God' many would disown as a manifest contradiction in terms; yet beyond this it does not seem possible for the pluralist to go. It is however a sign of the times that there are not a few theologians who have been led by the problem of freedom and the problem of evil to entertain the pluralistic conception. Later on we shall have, of course, to consider the question further in connexion with these problems<sup>2</sup>. But so much for the present

<sup>1</sup> But see Supplementary Note IV.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Lectures XIII.—XVII.

concerning what I have called the upper limit of pluralism. Let us now turn to what in contrast we may term the lower limit.

Resuming our example of a circle or sphere: just as when the radius becomes infinite we have no longer a figure occupying space, but simply the whole of space itself; so when the radius is zero we have a figure no more, but simply a point in space which has position but neither parts nor magnitude. As the principle of continuity will not carry us to a transcendent upper limit, neither will it carry us to a transcendent lower one. The naked, slumbering monads of Leibniz, the monads whose so-called perception is absolutely confused or undifferentiated, are as much an abstract ideal as the mass-points of the physicist. Body without extension and a subject without consciousness are limiting concepts, not known realities within experience. If we attempt to trace the evolution of the world back to such an ideal beginning, as Spencer for example did, what becomes of our Many? Though eventually some are dominant over others, still—if evolution is to be thorough-going and complete—can we suppose that they begin by dominating? But if all are at first unconscious and slumbering, how is the awakening to begin? If all mirrored the same universe in the same as yet absolutely undifferentiated fashion, all would be so far homogeneous; and according to the principle of the identity of indiscernibles, which Leibniz himself had formulated, all would be one, all would have the same content which effectively would be no content; and there would thus be no ground for change and as little possibility of it. So then it would seem that as

the unattainable upper limit of pluralism points towards an absolute and unconditioned Being transcending the Many, so the unattainable lower limit points towards an indeterminate Being, an *ἄπειρον*, that affords no ground for the discrimination of individuals at all.

Again we may proceed in a different way only to reach a similar result. The goal of the pluralistic world at any stage in its progress is, we say, higher unity between its constituent monads and systems of monads—advance in organization both individual and social. We have left it for the present an open question whether the highest term is strictly an individual or an over-individual, a person or a society of persons. But the lowest can only consist of individuals; unless indeed anyone should think it worth while to call the primitive Many a society in the loosest sense, on the ground that it is in some sort a unity. When we advance to an organism as a complex of individuals or monads we assume the presence of a dominant monad, or what Leibniz called a *soul*. Its dominance must be regarded as due in part at least to its innate or essential superiority, not solely to the accident of its position: such absolute tychism could not conceivably be made to work. But if evolution as a historical process is to be thorough-going there must be a stage at which this dominance is not yet realised but remains so to say 'potential,' awaiting the fulfilment of its complementary conditions. Agamemnon and the men he was to lead were all much on a par as infants together in their cradles. And the fact that as evolution advances diversity increases suggests that all the differences that eventually emerge were originally latent. Such

absolute origin as the lower limit of evolution is as much beyond all experience as the absolute beginning of his own life is beyond the conscious experience of any individual among us. Such antitheses as nature and origin, form and matter, are for us always but relative.

Either way then if we attempt to regress to the lower limit we seem only to reach the illegitimate notion of pure potentiality; there is no *natura naturata*, and in order that the process, the *nasci*, may begin we seem to require a *Primum movens* that is not one of the nascent Many. Otherwise the nearer we approach to the beginning the more inconceivable the beginning becomes. We are thus led to regard our two limits as really related, as they are in the cosmogonies of Plato and Aristotle for example; that is to say, we are led to regard God as quickening the bare potentiality of a world into actual motion and life. We approximate too to the theism of Leibniz, who was likewise driven beyond the limits of his monadology proper. Not as *Monas monadum*, but as transcending all monads, God according to Leibniz as 'infinite intellect' contemplates the absolute totality of possible worlds and gives reality to that which his goodness has selected as the best.

In truth however all this rests, it is urged, on an outside, not an inside, view of the pluralistic position. The philosophies of Plato and Aristotle, which have determined the main trend of all subsequent speculation till comparatively recent times, shew a marked bias towards what is nowadays called Intellectualism. According to this, cognition is the primary factor in experience and pure contemplation the most perfect

state. Even for Leibniz activity was dependent on perception in such wise that confused perception and complete passivity were synonymous.

What is called Voluntarism however inverts all this. Conation, not cognition, is regarded as fundamental to life : it is the blind impulse to live that leads on to knowledge, just as it is for the sake of life that knowledge is valued ; not *vice versa*. This doctrine of the primacy of the practical first definitely announced by Kant, repeated and extended by Fichte, was still more emphatically proclaimed by Schopenhauer, the very title of whose chief work, *Die Welt als Wille und als Vorstellung*, is but the complete formulation of the doctrine already adumbrated by Kant. The things *per se* in the world are will, the things we know are but their appearance. For voluntarism an 'unconscious' world would not be either a dead material world or the bare potentiality of a living world only to be made actual by some fiat from without. On this view experience does not begin with sensation as a purely passive state ; it presupposes activity ; and cognition with its distinction of subject and object is a consequence of this. In the absence of that distinction this activity is called unconscious.

To be sure Fichte and Schopenhauer were singularists. But so far as the assumed relation of will to presentation is concerned, this seems more readily conceivable if there is a multiplicity of wills which interact, than if there is only a single will and nothing beside. In fact we seem then driven to assume a really inconceivable fractionation of the one unconscious will into many, in order that consciousness may arise.

Modern pluralists are, I think, almost invariably voluntarists, or as some of them prefer to call themselves, pragmatists. As such, while they admit the impossibility of regressing to the beginning of evolution, they deny that evolution requires a transcendent Prime Mover distinct from the Many: for the Many they hold are all prime movers, and so far *causæ sui*. I say 'so far,' because the term *causa sui* is generally construed as equivalent to absolute; but what is here meant, I take it, is only that each has an unconditional *existence* over against the rest while none has an unconditional *experience*. They are aware of each other in virtue of their own interaction: they interact in virtue of their inherent spontaneity. Will is the *ratio essendi* of presentation, presentation the *ratio cognoscendi* of will. Will is the logical *prius*, but as absolute beginnings are beyond us there is no question of chronological priority. The efficient causation in the world then is just this totality of prime movers, its final causation their organization into a higher unity.

Bearing this distinction in mind, an obvious objection made by von Hartmann, which would otherwise be a fatal objection, loses some of its force. "The aseity of the [one absolute] Substance," he says, is "for our discursive understanding, restricted [as that is] to the category of causality, the problem of problems; because it implies only the negative statement that this being is no more the effect of an other. When however the understanding still persists in applying the usual causal category in this case too, then it terms the [absolute] Substance its own effect and its own cause,—the understanding thereby only making a mockery of itself. That the [absolute] Substance groundlessly is

and not is not, that is for us the wonder of all wonders." A system of philosophy, he then goes on to urge, which multiplies this wonder innumerable times, as pluralism in his opinion does, stands self-condemned<sup>1</sup>. It might perhaps be replied that wonderfulness is inversely proportional to frequency. So far then v. Hartmann would be convicted of subtly begging the question. But pluralism, in fact, does not maintain that a world of  $n$  monads is a world of  $n$  absolutes. The totality may be called absolute, if there is nothing to condition it from without, but no one individual within it can be called absolute. Whether in the abstract an absolute totality of individuals or an absolute individual be the greater problem or the greater wonder is surely an idle question. The only real question is the question of fact. If pluralism is self-consistent and self-sufficient, it does not become a problem, merely because it is wonderful. And the like again, of course, would hold true of singularism.

But there is this difference between them, we start with the Many as given: so far they do not need to be 'deduced.' With the One we do not thus start. At the same time it must be allowed that pluralism cannot furnish, has never attempted to furnish anything deserving to be called a philosophical justification of itself—it is, as William James called it, radical empiricism; whereas for singularism in the abstract there have been ontological and *a priori* arguments in plenty. Pluralism, as Kant long ago remarked, is confined exclusively to cosmological arguments<sup>2</sup>. It starts with a discrete Many, severally related and therefore severally

<sup>1</sup> *Kategorienlehre*, p. 528.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. his remarks on the thesis of the fourth antinomy.

comparable, and beyond this its cardinal principles of continuity and evolution will not enable it to go. Neither by regressing can it reach a lowest limit or origin, in which all diversity is latent; nor by progressing can it reach a highest limit or goal in which all plurality is transcended. This, the pluralist's extremity, will doubtless be regarded as the singularist's opportunity. But the latter so far has never succeeded—without doing violence to the facts—in advancing beyond a more or less covert dualism of the One and the Many, of God and the World. The connexion of these two, that is to say, remains a problem. Thus in the latest and one of the most important expositions of singularism, its author, Mr Bradley, tells us:—"The fact of actual fragmentariness, I admit, I cannot explain. That experience should take place in finite centres, and should wear the form of finite 'thisness,' is in the end inexplicable. But"—he adds—"to be inexplicable and to be incompatible are not the same thing<sup>1</sup>." Here we have the whole matter in a nutshell. If pluralism is 'infected with contradictions,' as Mr Bradley affirms, we must turn, he contends, to singularism, that is to say, to Absolutism. If such an Absolute Being as he supposes, is possible, then, in view of the said contradictions, it must be declared actual. If, as we maintain, it is not possible, then we are reduced to scepticism, unless the asserted contradictions can be resolved. Even though not compelled by contradictions altogether to abandon pluralism, we ought to prefer Theism if that systematizes more and disappoints less. The difficulties of pluralism then must be our next topic.

<sup>1</sup> *Appearance and Reality*, 2nd edn, p. 226.



## LECTURE X.

### PSYCHOPHYSICAL AND METAPHYSICAL DIFFICULTIES IN PLURALISM.

There is one difficulty which the exposition I have attempted to give would so readily suggest, that it is perhaps best to mention it at the outset. The goal of final harmony and unification on which the personal idealist counts as—a far-off event, it may be, but still as—a rational possibility may yet never be attained, however rationally possible, because of what we ordinarily call physical hindrances. Let these consist, if you like, of the actions of inferior—sentient it may be—but still irrational monads: the disaster would be none the less appalling on that account, nor is its possibility for that reason very seriously diminished. For we have had meantime to allow that millennial dreams of a liberation of Nature from the thralldom of so-called physical evil are as fanciful as the legends of this subjection as a consequence of moral evil. It is true there are modern pluralists, Renouvier certainly and probably Dr Howison, who still defend such views of the solidarity of the cosmos. But if we smile at Fourier when he imagined that, so soon as we have learnt to dwell in brotherly love together, the whales will seize our ships by their cables and tow them to their destinations over seas no longer briny but pleasant to drink, must we not regard it as still more

extravagant to picture finite minds taming the earthquake and the tornado, to say nothing of checking the stars in their courses and staying the clash of worlds? For what to all appearance are physical set-backs, sometimes involving whole worlds, certainly exist. But they are the exception, not the rule. It may be that with time they will become rarer still. It may be too that as death is held to be but 'the covered way that leads to life, so these catastrophes do but open up an unseen order, which we can only dimly surmise. All that the pluralist can safely do is still to assert the spiritual possibility of harmony among rationals; and for the rest he can only maintain that the difficulty raised is one that also besets the theist's position. But there is this difference, the belief in an unseen world has a warrant, if theism is true, which pluralism alone cannot furnish: *per contra* the difficulty is graver for the one than it is for the other. On the whole then it will be best to defer these difficulties, which affect any theory of the world as a realm of ends, till they meet us again in our discussion of theism<sup>1</sup>.

One remark, before passing for the present from this topic, may however here be made. It is a well-known opinion widely held by scientific men that the second law of thermodynamics, otherwise called the law of the dissipation of energy, points conclusively to universal death as the final goal of all. The pessimist von Hartmann professed to see in this law the chief consolation that science brings to men. But one recent pluralist makes an ingenious attempt to rebut the argument, that seems at least theoretically

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Lect. xvi.

sound. The process of degradation, he urges in the first place, is only asymptotic; it will therefore never be complete<sup>1</sup>. And in the next place he maintains that, since in psychophysics it is the difference of intensities not their absolute amount that is significant, therefore life will always be possible<sup>2</sup>. But in truth the most effective reply is much simpler. The second law of thermodynamics is entirely statistical: it is not binding on the interaction of individuals at all. For the philosophy of personal idealism this law is so far then of no account.

Another difficulty that besets pluralism, and one again from which theism is not altogether free, relates to the past and future existence of individuals beyond the range of our direct experience concerning them. How are we to interpret what we know as the birth and the death of a given *L* or *M*? According to the pluralistic, as according to the Leibnizian view, all the individuals there are have existed from the first and will continue to exist indefinitely<sup>3</sup>. Birth and death, then, cannot really be what they seem to be. But it still remains true that every man, as we know him, came at a certain date upon this world's stage and, after playing his several parts for a brief interval, will presently pass off. Is he born and does he die but once,

<sup>1</sup> In this he had been already anticipated by Prof. Poynting. See *Naturalism and Agnosticism*, 3rd ed. 1. p. 321.

<sup>2</sup> L. Stern, 'Der zweite Hauptsatz der Energetik u.s.w.' *Zeitschrift f. Philos. u. philos. Kritik*, 1903.

<sup>3</sup> Pluralism, at all events, must assume that every monad relatively to every other is self-existent; for obviously, if one were the ground of the existence of others, they and it would be related as Creator and created and could not belong to the same ontal series.

or has he births and deaths innumerable? The latter alternative, that of metempsychosis in various forms, most of them very extravagant, has long prevailed in the eastern world, while the other alternative, that of a single birth, has been current almost universally among the civilisations of the west. For many singularistic philosophies, of course, the beginning of a soul-life, like everything that pertains to the Many, is nothing more than a phase or moment of the One. But Christian theism has always striven, however inconsistently, to see more in it than this. The doctrine known as creationism attributes the independent existence of each human soul to a definite creative act; while the opposite doctrine, called traducianism, holds that all souls are generated from other souls in the same way and at the same time as bodies from other bodies. Neither of these positions, between which theologians seem continually to have wavered, is compatible with strict pluralism. The pluralist, in fact, seems shut up to some modification of Leibniz's doctrine that all souls have preexisted 'always in a sort of organized body,' which at the time of generation undergoes a certain transformation and augmentation. But the Leibnizian doctrine of *emboîtement*, that, for example, all mankind preexisted in Adam, modern biology, as we have seen, will not allow him to accept. Again, as we have also seen, he is not compelled to adopt the view to which Leibniz inclined, that reason is imparted to human souls at the time of birth 'by a special operation or by a kind of transcreation<sup>1</sup>.'

But the pluralist may fairly be expected to come

<sup>1</sup> *Théodicée*, pt 1, § 91. Cf. Lect. iv. pp. 90 ff.

to closer quarters with the problem of heredity than Leibniz either did or could do. Here in the first place one point seems clear: what is metaphorically described as heredity—as if there were a bequest from one organism to another—is rather so much habit or memory, which pertains to the offspring in virtue of its original continuity with the ancestral stem. The process of regeneration, whereby an organism restores a lost part, and the process of budding, whereby it produces a new whole, are simply instances of such continuity. Even sexual reproduction, in spite of the important preliminary preparation that the maturation of its two constituents requires, seems to be essentially nothing more than the union of two buds. But in none of these processes, so far, is there any individual to be found that can be called the heir, and therefore no ground for calling their result a heritage. All we can say is that what has been done myriads of times is done once more: in regeneration or asexual reproduction the old routine is repeated precisely; and in sexual reproduction there is the joint result of two compatible routines that are similar but not entirely identical. As evidence of the continuity of the process and the completeness of its routine we may appeal to the so-called biogenetic law or principle of palingenesis—that ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny. But is the new individual nothing but 'a chip off the old block,' nothing but a new specimen of the species regarded as self-repeating? The lower the form of life that we consider the less ground have we for assuming more: there seems to be almost as much routine in the conduct of the simplest organisms as there was in their

construction. Contrariwise the higher the form of life we take note of, the more we seem driven to assume that the organism has a director, and is not a mere automaton. It is here that we are led to talk of an heir and to regard the body as his heritage. This heir is the soul or dominant monad. But where does it come from and how does it get possession of this body? These questions however implicitly contradict the pluralist's assumption, that souls do not get bodies but always have them. The biogenetic law is then a psychophysical law; in other words, it has a psychological side; hence to say that the genetic history of the individual summarizes the life-history of the race would better express this.

One essential difference between the two is, of course, that the life-history of the race is original, is a long process of gradual acquisition by way of trial and error, in short, answers to what we have identified with *natura naturans*; whereas the genetic history of the individual is a derivative, rapid and, so to say, substantially invariable process, in a word, is routine or *natura naturata*. This difference is apparent again in the dependence of the primary process on immediate commerce with the environment and the independence of the derivative process of any such intercourse. The eye which in the race has been developed in contact with the light is reproduced in the individual in darkness. The higher vertebrates, whose history has led them through the most varied environments—first water, then land, then water again, as in the case of the whales—complete their embryonic life directly shut off from environmental changes altogether.

According to Haeckel the life-history of the human race can be biologically marked out into sixteen stages of steadily increasing complication. "The entire succession of men, throughout the whole course of ages," Pascal has said, "is to be regarded as one man always living and always learning<sup>1</sup>." I have myself, to meet the needs of psychological exposition and yet leave aside the problem of heredity, made use of a similar idea. It will help us forward, I think, if I may be allowed to quote a passage from what I wrote years ago on this point:—"We know that in the course of each individual's life there is more or less of progressive differentiation or development. Further, it is believed that there has existed a series of sentient individuals beginning with the lowest form of life and advancing continuously up to man.... But what was experience in the past has become instinct in the present. The descendant has no consciousness of his ancestors' failures, when performing at once by an 'untaught ability' what they slowly and perhaps painfully acquired. But, if we are to attempt to follow the genesis of mind from its earliest dawn, it is the primary experience rather than the eventual instinct that we have to keep in view. To this end, then, it is proposed to assume that we are dealing with one individual who has continuously advanced from the beginning of psychical life, and not with a series of individuals, all of whom, save the first, 'inherited' certain innate capacities from their progenitors. The life-history of such an individual, then, would correspond

<sup>1</sup> *Pensées et Opuscules* edit. Brunshvicg, p. 80: quoted by Prof. Sorley, *Ethics of Naturalism*, 2nd ed., p. 249.

with all that was new in the life of a certain typical series of individuals, each of which advanced a stage in mental differentiation<sup>1</sup>." Let us now suppose our imaginary immortal to be set back once more to the beginning but to retain the memory of his former experiences. We may be sure that in that case he will make good the ground lost in much less time than he required at first, and also without following all the windings of the tentative route into which his previous inexperience had led him: his route the second time will be routine. Illustrative instances in plenty will occur to everyone at once.

But the situation we have supposed is exactly that of a new organism. It does repeat with no hesitation or uncertainty so much of the ancestral experience as had become habitual, secondarily automatic or organized, and it does so because it is continuous with the organisms to which this work had been previously delegated<sup>2</sup>. To understand this we must regard the organism, in Leibnizian fashion, as an orderly hierarchy of monads and not as merely a vastly complex physico-chemical mechanism. The acquisition of new experience by commerce with the environment, the process that is to say of development through

<sup>1</sup> Article 'Psychology,' *Ency. Brit.* 11th edn, vol. xxii. pp. 555 f.

<sup>2</sup> But, it may be objected, between the new organisms and the old there is always more or less 'variation': the two then are not strictly continuous. This we must allow, but on the other hand we may not assume that variation is ever independent of experience taken in the wide sense which the pluralist gives to it. In this way we can understand the fact that variations are vastly greater in sexual as compared with asexual reproduction.



experience—in which clearer and distincter percepts, wider and exacter adjustments are attained—is to be conceived as a process in which subordinate monads are drilled and manoeuvred: here it is that, as we say, function perfects structure. We may call it biotic as distinct from genetic organization. We know directly by observation that the memories and dexterities that are acquired latest are the least engrained and the first to fail. Entirely in keeping with this we observe too that it is specific characters rather than the generic characters, upon which they are superposed, that are liable to variation<sup>1</sup>. The transmissibility of acquired automatisms is then proportional to their persistence. To say that no acquired characters are transmitted would be tantamount to saying that nothing is transmitted; and to say that the automatisms accomplished in a single lifetime are not in any degree transmissible is to say that transmission can never begin. In this gradation in the persistence of organic differentiations we have, it would seem, the key to the genetic history of the individual or ontogeny: till the lower and earlier automatisms are evolved there is no *métier* for the higher and later, which depend upon them, to which they stand in the relation of matter to form.

But a viable organism, after it has developed, continues to grow or augment. It thus becomes possible at length not indeed mechanically to divide it, but still to divide it, so to say, selectively. Herein seems to lie the possibility of a new organism. In what way the sifting out, collecting and enrolling of supernumeraries is effected we can at present hardly even

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Darwin's *Origin of Species*, 6th edn, pp. 121 f.

conjecture. The pluralist must at all events maintain that these processes depend in some way on the sentience and appetition of the several monads concerned and also on the affinities and antipathies which their natures determine. Provided some procedure on these lines is conceivable, that is sufficient to make his position tenable. Now that far at any rate we are able to go, helped, as in other cases, by the analogy of what we know of the higher phases of living intercourse. Indeed it is not too much to say that on these lines a far simpler hypothesis is conceivable than Weismann's of the continuity of germ-plasm, for example. But there still remain difficulties.

Thus it is assumed that the supreme monad or soul of the system is within it from the first, but its dominance is manifest only towards the close of the genetic process; but how is it attained? How in particular, in sexual reproduction, when two colonies unite? Is there here a rivalry or conflict between two potential monarchs? Or is there possibly after all, as some psychologists suppose, no unity at all beyond that of the system: is that only a common-wealth and not a monarchy? But such a view, though by no means devoid altogether of justification, seems inconsistent with pluralism; for, rigorously followed out, it would altogether destroy the notion of dominance on which the entire doctrine of monadism is built. On the whole it seems best to regard the organism on its psychical side as simply the *Anlage* or primary

<sup>1</sup> And this by the way, it may be incidentally remarked, suggests an analogical argument in favour of a supreme world-spirit.

medium of the soul's life: this is its heritage but how it comes by it we do not know<sup>1</sup>.

We come now to the difficulties besetting the pluralistic interpretation of death. Why, it may be asked, should there be death at all, why should not the individual enjoy that prolonged existence which we have imagined only for expository purposes? I do not propose however to enter upon the far-reaching inquiry which this question opens up, since the difficulties that more immediately concern us are of another sort. Death, as the more or less complete dissolution of the organism, means that the soul in consequence, so far as it is thus deprived of its *locus standi*, is, to use Leibniz's phrase, in the position of a deserter from the general order. Temporarily it is in a like position during sleep; and death for Leibniz was but a longer and profounder sleep: in neither case did he believe that the continuity of the individual's life was completely broken. Still the amount of personal continuity between its successive lives might in general be extremely slight. In fact if the notion of a merely bodily resurrection was incredible in Leibniz's day it is more incredible still in our own. Who expects to see trilobites and ammonites, the pterodactyle and the diplodocus come to life again?—No doubt we find the passage back from the organic to the inorganic barred on every side. Nature has no crematorium: she turns dead sheep and oxen into jackals and crows it may be, but not into ashes. Such facts would almost suggest that the best thing to befall a dying man would be to be eaten by such of his younger

<sup>1</sup> Cf. below, Lect. XVIII.

contemporaries as liked him, and according to Professor Tylor personal affection was one among other motives for cannibalism<sup>1</sup>. At any rate 'metempsychosis' in some form seems an unavoidable corollary of thorough-going pampsychism<sup>2</sup>, so long as we look broadly at the facts of life as a whole.

We have just noted in the economy of nature a tendency to conserve the organic: is there also some principle of 'conservation of value' tending to prevent rational, self-conscious spirits from lapsing back into merely animal souls? This question Leibniz answered with a decided affirmative. Thus in a letter to Arnauld, after substituting what he called metaschematism, change of body, for metempsychosis or change of soul, he continues:—"But spirits are not subjected to these revolutions, or rather it must be that these revolutions of bodies subserve the Divine economy in relation to spirits... They must always keep their moral qualities and their memory in order to be perpetual citizens of that universal all-perfect commonwealth of which God is the monarch, which can lose none of its members and the laws of which are higher than those of bodies<sup>3</sup>." Apart from its theological standpoint this is obviously a purely dogmatic statement. But the idea of a higher spiritual order, as we have already seen, is perfectly compatible with pluralism and—though it lack adequate empirical evidence—directly

<sup>1</sup> This practice, so-called endophagy, is "intelligible enough on the principle that 'the life is not allowed to go out of the family'." *Chambers's Encyclopaedia*, s.v.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. above, p. 205.

<sup>3</sup> Lettre à Arnauld, *Philosophische Schriften*, Gerhardt's ed. II. pp. 99 f.

suggested by the principle of continuity, against which the Leibnizian theology more or less offends<sup>1</sup>.

But without this idea and 'the conservation of values,' the *Weltanschauung* of pluralism is sadly far away from the heart's desire. The biologist pictures for us the gradual evolution of the human species onwards from some primitive moner, and the sociologist the gradual advance of humanity from savagery to civilisation. But what of all this progress if we are forced to say of all the individuals concerned that one labours and another reaps the reward? The individual, it may be, that falls out of the ranks for a time is not dead but only sleepeth, yet if he return not as the same identical person but only, so to say, as the same metaphysical entity; and especially if, as the chances are, the higher his former position the more likelihood that he will start again in a lower one, what—we are forced once more to ask—what worth or meaning is there in such revolutions? And when we remember that whole species become extinct, we may be told that at least the fittest survive. But then it is only in what we may call the ascending phase of things that the fitter is the better: when this earth enters upon its inevitable decline the fitter will be the worse. But every winter turns to spring, it is replied, and old worlds are continually rejuvenated. Yes, but once more we urge that if there is no personal continuity between the old constituents and the new, if as with the individual beginning a new life, a world entering upon a fresh evolution cannot start where it left off and may even begin in less favourable conditions

<sup>1</sup> Cf Latta, *Leibniz, The Monadology &c.*, p. 265 note.

than before, what ground have we to expect progress on the whole? In a word, without such spiritual continuity as theism alone seems able to ensure, it looks as if a pluralistic world were condemned to a Sisyphean task. *Per aspera ad aspera* may be its motto, but *facilis descensus Averno* seems to be its fate.

Let us turn now to metaphysical difficulties. There is one such objection to pluralism that will at once occur to every student of Lotze's philosophy, one that is all the more impressive because Lotze—unlike most who maintain the doctrine of an Absolute One—starts as we have done from the side of the Many, which seems to confront us at first. He finds however that the concept of causal interaction or 'transeunt action' as he terms it, which we ordinarily employ alike in everyday life and in our scientific expositions, is really unthinkable. He is therefore driven to postulate an absolute substance, of which the Many are in truth but states or modifications. Moreover such a fundamental unity of things was, it seemed to him, analytically involved in the facts of what we conceive as reciprocal action. But what is strange is that Lotze, who was never a dualist, who from first to last was clear upon one point, viz., that there are no things that are things and nothing more, should nevertheless have discussed this problem of causation in connexion with physical action. He is aware, of course, that for the scientific investigator who is content to stop at 'occasional causes' there is no problem at all; he has indeed himself emphasized the methodological utility of occasionalism in its modern or positivist

guise. But for philosophy the question, how or why, when the state of a certain thing  $A$  changes to  $\alpha$ , that of another thing  $B$  should change to  $\beta$ , has been a serious problem since the days of Hume at any rate. Assuming that  $A$  and  $B$  are independent things, Lotze's argument in its barest outline is simple enough. Since attributes cannot be separated from substances, "no state can detach itself from the thing  $A$ , whose state it was, so as to subsist even for an infinitesimally small moment between  $A$  and  $B$ , as a state but yet nobody's state, and then connect itself with  $B$  so as to become its state<sup>1</sup>." The facts themselves not being in question the only conclusion according to Lotze is that  $A$  and  $B$  are not independent substances, that is not substances at all, but only different modifications of the one absolute substance, which we may call  $M$ . The state of the universe at the one moment he represents by the equation  $M = \phi(ABR)$  and that at the other as  $M = \phi(\alpha\beta R)$ ; that is to say he regards the Absolute as compensating one change of state, that of  $A$  into  $\alpha$ , by the other, that of  $B$  into  $\beta$ ; the rest of the universe, represented by  $R$ , being, for simplicity's sake, regarded as in the particular case remaining unaffected.

But considering so-called 'things' apart, this doctrine of Lotze's seems very closely to resemble Berkeley's

<sup>1</sup> It was long assumed that this difficulty only applies to 'action at a distance' and not to 'contact action.' And so far as perception or the constructions of abstract mechanics are concerned this may be true. But actual bodies are not ideal solids; they are more like clouds, or swarms of particles in motion. Moreover absolute contact implies a common point or surface (interface), in fact no longer contiguity but continuity. Cf. *Naturalism and Agnosticism*, 3rd edn, 1. pp. 122 ff.

well-known doctrine of sense-symbolism. The entire physical world, 'the whole choir of heaven and furniture of earth,' is but the medium, divinely constituted and sustained—as it were the language and the instrumentality—whereby finite spirits communicate and interact. Now it seems *prima facie* perfectly possible to adapt this doctrine to the pluralistic standpoint: in fact in some way or other the pluralist must regard all perceptual objects as the manifestation of subjects or ejects. There would be important differences of detail, no doubt; for example, as we have already said, we should begin with a Babel and have to achieve 'one language and one speech.' In short the equation by which Lotze typifies the 'self-conservation' of his Absolute seems so far to answer simply to what we might call its behaviour in sustaining the intercourse of free agents, if such a medium were necessary, as he for the most part inclined to doubt: his equation amounts in fact merely to the doctrine of physical conservation.

When however *A* and *B* are not things but persons, can we still say that they are merely modifications of the Absolute? When *A* changes to *a*--when the child, feeling hunger, wants food, let us say, and *B* his father, let us suppose, thereupon changes to *β*, that is, gives him bread—are we to believe that the persons here are not beings for themselves but only so-called things, that they are nothing but modifications of an Absolute, that adjusts one to the other solely on its own account? Such an interpretation of personal intercourse is clearly untenable and Lotze did not seriously entertain it. The description that he has



given of personal intercourse, regarded from the side of the Many, differs entirely from the conceptual framework by which science summarises what is called physical interaction. There is here no constant equation involving rigidly concatenated variables, no network of relations of which individuals are but the *termini*, no lines of direction subsisting between them along which in some mysterious way actions and passions are interchanged. The spatial metaphor of influences, energies or forces transferred and transformed, which makes up the concept of transeunt action, is no longer applicable even as a figure to personal intercourse. The doings and sufferings of persons are both alike immediate: what brings them into relation is a 'sympathetic rapport' or interest that rests upon cognition. All that is strictly personal in social intercourse is of this nature. It entirely consists, in the first place, of the apprehension or the knowledge on the part of one person of the 'attitude,' the feelings and intentions displayed or announced by other persons; secondly, in their cooperation or opposition, actual or prospective: and finally, following on this, in the new feelings and intentions of the person interested, to which this knowledge leads. We can readily imagine situations in abundance that are altogether of this sort, into which—even when life itself is at stake—no physical constraint whatever directly enters. Think, for instance, of all that the phrase '*noblesse oblige*' implies, of Regulus returning to Carthage, of Socrates refusing to fly, of the Hindoo *suttee*, which means, I understand, 'virtuous wife,' or of the Japanese '*hari kari*' or 'happy despatch'; or again

of the wiles of the hunter and the angler, who have to count simply on the behaviour of their game till it brings itself into a position to be dealt with, so to say, as a thing. It is, however, as needless as it would be tedious to picture out such cases in detail.

But usually in these cases there is, in addition to the conduct of those primarily concerned, that of subordinates and accessories, upon which they can safely count—the law and the police, impartial spectators, servants and retainers; and again dogs, decoys, stalking horses and the like. All this we may call social environment in a wide sense; upon it we rely and depend, much as we rely and depend upon what we call the physical environment. And we have seen already that this social environment, so far as habit and custom enter into it, tends to approximate to the character of the physical environment: nay that very character, which we express by such terms as law and order, subject and attribute, is, we know, so much metaphor borrowed from the world of persons. For the pluralist, however, it is more than metaphor. If the Leibnizian assumption, that there are no beings entirely devoid of perception and spontaneity—which Lotze too accepted—is otherwise sound, then the objections to transeunt action between *things* become irrelevant. For these objections do not apply to personal interaction based on mutual *rapport*, which is all that the pluralist requires. On the contrary the very fact that this suffices for his view of the world is so far an argument in its favour.

But there is still another objection to pluralism, likewise urged by Lotze, that is more serious.

Granted that sentient and conative beings can shape their conduct relatively to each other—in so far as they are clearly aware of each other's presence and attitude—without the need of another being distinct from them all to play the part of a go-between, still the fact that such 'sympathetic *rappor*t' exists is in Lötze's opinion nothing less than an 'inexhaustible wonder.' Nay the mere fact that all the Many are comparable and commensurable, that no individual, however unique, is altogether disparate and isolated from the rest, though undeniable, is such a wonder: only extreme familiarity leads us to take it for granted as a matter of course. Lotze is content to press only this second broader and simpler issue, which he regards as a form of the cosmological argument<sup>1</sup>. The first which approximates rather to the teleological argument he seems content to waive. Still it may be well to look at both.

Let us begin with the argument in its more detailed form. We can readily imagine a case sufficiently analogous to bring out the point of the argument, how very far the actual relatedness of things is from being self-evident or self-explanatory. Let us suppose that we had a sack of type continually shuffled, which differs however from ordinary type in one respect. When letters forming syllables come together we will suppose that their arrangement remains comparatively stable, that when syllables forming words come together this arrangement is still more stable, and similarly of words forming sentences and so on; that generally the more meaning the more stability. Under such

<sup>1</sup> *Microcosmus*, Eng. trans. vol. II. pp. 668 f.

circumstances the more, 'sense' the final arrangement presented the more we should be inclined to believe that we had been dealing from the first not with a random collection but with a definite selection, with what, in fact, was all along really a whole and not merely an aggregate. And should the final arrangement be complete and perfect without one redundant or deficient letter, this presumption would amount to certainty.

No doubt the better fitting arrangements of our world are to be regarded as the more stable arrangements. The Many however are not, like type, moulded unalterably once for all: on the contrary they must be regarded as more or less plastic and adaptable, as mutually moulding each other in a greater or less degree. The round man, to be sure, avoids the square hole; and yet if circumstances force him into it, he usually contrives to adapt it or to adapt himself. The limpet shapes its shell to fit the rock, the *Pholas* shapes the rock to fit its shell. And after all, the teleological harmony to be found in the world is not such as to force on us the conviction that it is due solely to a single underlying or overruling principle. "Taken alone," Lotze himself allows, "it would more easily lead to the polytheistic view of a plurality of divine beings, each dominating a special department of nature as its special genius, their diverse modes of administration agreeing too so far as to attain to a certain general compatibility but not to a harmony that is altogether complete." But then is it not strange to maintain that the pluralistic view, which is admittedly suggested directly by the facts of the world, is yet

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.* vol. II. p. 667.

really inconceivable, and that the opposite view, which the facts seem at first sight to negative, is nevertheless the only view that is not self-contradictory? This, however, is what Lotze does: let us next examine this position somewhat more closely.

The Many are all related: they interact. This interrelation is at once the *ratio essendi* and the *ratio cognoscendi* of their comparability. No two are altogether different, for all are conative and cognitive to some extent. Such is the familiar pluralistic doctrine. And now, says Lotze, because all this is so, the Many are substantially *one*, are *only* different modifications of a single Being that we designate the Absolute<sup>1</sup>. The Many are either severally comparable or they are not. If they are not, there can be no knowledge of their plurality: if they are, then they are fundamentally and ultimately one. Such is Lotze's short and easy method with pluralism. It yields, I fear, only a 'cheap and easy monism.' There can be no experience of a plurality, whether of beings, qualities or events, that are absolutely disparate and disconnected—that is certain. All experienced diversity implies some identity; and, for the matter of that, all experienced identity some diversity. All this is so much logical commonplace. From this it follows that to every known or knowable Many there will be some common term applicable to them all, which *logically* unifies them all. But it leaves the question of their real unity untouched. Ice, water, steam, is a plurality which turns out to consist only of varying states of one substance. Gold, silver, copper, is a plurality which has not been thus unified: logically it belongs

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Grundzüge der Metaphysik*, 1883, § 48

to the one class, metal. The class is logically one, but we do not say there *must* be a single prime and ultimate metal. The Many of pluralism are in like manner a logical whole: they constitute the class of entelechies or persons in the widest sense, beings, that is to say, who are something for themselves, conative and cognitive individuals bent on self-conservation and seeking the good. To resolve the logical universal itself into a personal individual, of which the several persons that it denotes are but modifications, so far from explaining the facts denoted, seems flatly to contradict them. Yet this is what Lotze does. To be sure the Many are more than a logical whole: they are a real unity, but a unity of another order, just as a regiment is a unity though it is not a soldier. This other unity answers to the fact—a fact, it is important to notice, which perception and appetition imply—viz., that the Many are severally related by their mutual interaction: for each, as subject, the rest constitute an objective continuum. We have not, I repeat, two distinct and separable facts, first the Many existing in isolation, and then their interaction, either subsequently intervening as a real *mutuum commercium* for them or else preestablished as a merely ‘ideal’ harmony independently of them: the former answering to the Herbartian, the latter to the Leibnizian pluralism. For modern pluralism the universe is the totality of monads really interacting; and this is one fact. The plurality implies this unity and this unity implies the plurality. But this fact, says Lotze, is an inexhaustible wonder. Unquestionably the universe *is* an inexhaustible wonder. Still after all a wonder is not a contradiction. Returning then to Lotze’s formula,

$M = \phi(ABR)$  or  $\phi(ABR) = M$ , for the mere equation gives no priority to one side over the other; if it can be shown that  $M$  is more than the name we give to a plurality of reals  $A, B, C, \dots$ , whose functional relation is symbolised by  $\phi$ —that  $M$  is in fact itself the one absolute reality, and  $\phi$  the relation which ‘its individuality as a self-conserving unity’ imposes upon its several differentiations or modes  $A, B, C, \dots$ —all well and good. But the mere formula will not accomplish this. Taken as an abstract formula it may suggest either alternative, but taken as a description of the universe or *mundus*,  $M$ , regarded empirically or *a posteriori*, it is no longer equally ambiguous. From this immanent standpoint  $M$  does not resolve the wonder, it merely names it. If we are to get any further we must assume that  $M$  is transcendent, an *ens extramundanum*, to use Kant’s phrase; and this all theism does that is worthy of the name. Then, however,  $A, B, R$  will no longer be merely modes or states of this  $M$ . But to express the relation of this transcendent Being to the world of experience no equational formula seems either appropriate or adequate. Theism, however, promises to effect much in resolving the difficulties of pluralism, and to the careful discussion of theism I propose to devote the second part of these lectures. Meanwhile I think we must insist that the way cannot be cleared in any summary fashion by convicting the pluralist’s *Weltanschauung* not merely of incompleteness but of actual contradictions. In fact, if it were radically infected with contradictions, we have seen, I trust, that the way to theism would be hopelessly barred; for from pluralism speculation really always has and always must begin.

## PART II.

# THEISM.

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### LECTURE XI.

#### THE IDEA OF CREATION.

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We have seen that modern pluralism is, on its own  
cession, 'radically empirical.' It makes no attempt  
duce the universe from a single absolute principle,  
lead to deduce it at all. The world is taken  
simply as we find it, as a plurality of active individuals  
unified only in and through their mutual interactions.  
These interactions again are interpreted throughout  
on the analogy of social transactions, as a *mutuum  
commercium*; that is to say, as based on cognition and  
conation. To the speculative mind *pur sang* there is  
nothing satisfactory about such a view unless perhaps  
its frankness.

But then, on the other hand, there are objections to  
all attempts to proceed altogether *a priori*. It seems  
obviously puerile to ask, for example, for a sufficient  
reason why there is something rather than nothing.  
This notion of being absolutely thoroughgoing, of  
building up a metaphysic without presuppositions,  
one that shall start from nothing and explain all, is,  
I repeat, futile. Such a metaphysic has its own



assumption, and that an absurd one, viz., that nothing is the logical *prius* of something. Well at any rate, it may be said, if we must start from something, let us at least start from what is absolutely necessary, or rather let us not stop till we reach it : let us not rest in what is merely actual, for that can only be contingent. But, paradoxical though it may sound, necessary being is but another aspect of contingent being ; for within the limits of our experience only that is called *really* necessary which is inevitably conditioned by its cause, and is thus contingent on this, that is to say, follows from it. In other words real as distinct from formal necessity is synonymous with causation ; and moreover as Kant said, this real or causal necessity "extend the further than the field of possible experience, and any then does not apply to the existence of things as substances ; because such substances can never be looked upon as empirical effects or as something that happens or comes to be<sup>1</sup>." Thus to talk of absolutely necessary being as the *foundation* of the universe, so to say, is only to be guilty of the fallacy of Locke's poor Indian philosopher, the fallacy of applying to the whole a concept that is applicable only to the part. "The favourite notion of the philosophers," said Schopenhauer with wonted bitterness, "of 'absolutely necessary being' involves a contradiction : the predicate 'absolute,' which means 'dependent on nothing else, removes the characteristic through which alone 'necessary' is thinkable and has any sense<sup>2</sup>." The absolute totality of being has no cause, it simply is. To attempt

<sup>1</sup> *Critique of Pure Reason*, M. Muller's trans. p. 198.

<sup>2</sup> *Vierfache Wurzel*, u.s.w. § 49.

to reflect causation back on itself as in such phrases as *causa sui*, aseity, or being through self, really adds nothing to our bare recognition of this being. But if there is no sense in calling the absolute totality of being necessary, there is none in calling it contingent. Within it there is necessity and contingency in plenty: every part is related to the rest: but the whole, we have again to say, simply is.

If then the whole simply is, those philosophers have only deluded themselves, who have essayed by the royal road of pure thought to determine *a priori* what it must be. The only *a priori* statements concerning the world that are beyond challenge are purely formal statements; yet the entire body of logical and mathematical truths would not yield us the faintest anticipatory gleam of what the actual world would be, even if it were possible to know such truths in advance. But this supposition too is only a delusion. for validity implies reality and is otherwise meaningless. The two are distinct but they are not absolutely separable. The notion of a sort of antecedent logical fate determining all subsequent existence is psychologically explicable as the result—not of the supremacy of our reason—but of the limitations of our imagination. We distinguish relatively to a particular case between form and matter. But when we make the distinction absolute, pure form and pure matter both alike become empty abstractions. We find the logical to be in every case necessary, the empirical in every case contingent; but we are guilty of a sort of *fallacia compositionis* when we imagine that the totality of the empirical on the one side is conditioned by the totality

of the logical on the other<sup>1</sup>. The enormous labour that Kant is known to have spent in deducing his table of categories from his logical table of judgments is perhaps the most disastrous instance of mistaken ingenuity to be found in the whole history of philosophy; for to that in very large measure may be traced the daring but hopeless enterprises of his idealist successors, Fichte, Schelling and Hegel. Nobody ever has, nobody ever will, derive the categories of substance, cause, end, or any other concept concerning reality, from any source altogether independent of experience.

All ontology alike then has to begin with the question: What is Reality<sup>2</sup>? And nowadays pluralist and singularist alike answer: It is Experience. But the difference between them is that the pluralist is content to stop at the totality of finite experiences, whereas the singularist, or at all events the theist, with whom we are now primarily concerned, maintains that beyond the universe of the Many there is a single transcendent experient, who comprehends the whole.

The superiority of the theistic position, if it can be sustained, seems indisputable: it will then be, to use Kant's words, "an ideal without a flaw." Well, in the first place, it is superior in respect of its unity. On the pluralistic view every one of the finite individuals is related to all the rest but only for himself. In

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Lotze, *Microcosmus*, Eng. trans. II. p. 705 and *Metaphysic*, § 88 *fn.*

<sup>2</sup> This may entail a preliminary inquiry into the nature of knowledge, but epistemology is after all only a preparation for ontology.

Leibnizian language each mirrors the whole from a unique standpoint, and therefore *not* the whole, but only an aspect of the whole. The pluralistic whole, then, is a whole of experiences, but not a whole experience, a whole of lives but not a living whole, a whole of beings but without a complete and perfect being. Is such a whole really a unity at all: is it more than a totality? We have a type of a higher unity than this in our own experience as self-conscious subjects. Here there is a unity which is more than the related objective continuum, a unity to which all this belongs and refers. Now remove from such an experience the relativity which 'standpoint' implies and you approach the theistic ideal of an absolute experience, the experience of a living and acting Spirit whose 'centre is everywhere, whose circumference is nowhere,' an experience complete at all points and including every one. The pluralist's universe in the light of this transcendent Being would thus have a unity which it would otherwise lack.

Not only so, but in the second place the pluralist's universe would itself be immeasurably enriched if the theistic idea of God's relation to this universe were accepted. For according to that God is not simply a transcendent Being, existing aloof and apart from the world, he is also immanent, and active within it. And such active presence of the One Spirit, who alone knows all, affords—manifestly—an assurance that the pluralist's ideal will be attained, an assurance which we have had to allow must else be wanting. For it would be extravagantly arbitrary to assume that this one transcendent Being alone would be more devoid of

benevolent purpose than finite beings are. At any rate the theist believes that this God who knows all loves all. And so in the third place it is evident that the theistic idea not merely adds to our confidence in the eventual realisation of the pluralist's 'ideal' but it enhances the character of that ideal by all the ineffable blessedness that the presence of God must yield.

But to determine what is reality, we have agreed, is the first business of philosophy. Can we then prove the existence of God? Attempts innumerable to prove this have been made—as of course we know—all of them reducible to one or other of the three forms called respectively the ontological, the cosmological and the teleological argument. The fatal defects of all these have, it is almost universally conceded, been clearly exposed once for all by Kant. The ontological argument, as he has shown, involves the common metaphysical fallacy of hypostatizing an idea; the teleological argument does not carry us beyond pluralism; and the cosmological only does so by implicitly assuming the ontological.—But though demonstrations of the existence of God are unattainable, it by no means follows that the idea is theoretically worthless. It has even in this respect—to say nothing of its practical value—a 'regulative use' as what Kant called a *focus imaginarius*, a use which he declared to be not only admirable but indispensable. What Kant meant by a *focus imaginarius*, it may be worth while to illustrate by an example. Suppose the earth were wrapt in cloud all day while the sky was clear at night, so that we were able to see the planets and observe

their movements as we do now, though the sun itself was invisible. The best account we could give of the planetary motions would still be to refer them to what for us in accordance with our supposition would only be an imaginary focus, but one to which was assigned a position identical with the sun's position. The pluralist's universe, according to Kant, answers to the wandering orbs that we see and God to the sun, which we are supposed not to see, but merely to conceive as giving to their motions both reason and unity. It behoves us then, especially in view of the acknowledged difficulties and incompleteness of the pluralistic scheme taken alone, to examine this sublime conception with reverence and with care. Is the theistic ideal verily without a flaw?

One thing is at once clear: theism is not simply the possible crown and completion of pluralism: such a transcendent addition will, it may be expected, change all. It introduces one essential modification, at any rate, viz, the idea of creation. It does not, that is to say, assume merely that one transcendent Being exists above and beyond the whole series of the Many, however extended; but it assumes further that this one Being is related to them in a way in which none of them is related to the rest: they do not simply coexist along with it, they exist somehow in it and through it.

In this idea of creation there are two sides to consider, its relation to the world and its relation to God. As to the first—it cannot be said that the world as we know it involves the idea of creation as a fact. If it did, we should have direct and tangible evidence

of God's existence. "The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament sheweth his handiwork," sang the Psalmist long ago. Possibly it is so, but there is nothing in all our physical experience that *compels* us to admit it: on the other hand there is nothing that would justify us in denying it. Further, the metaphor of making, of handiwork, which is the sole empirical content of the term 'creation,' is inadequate: *making* out of nothing, in short, is a contradiction. But then this is not the meaning of creation: it is not a making or shaping at all. The idea is, in fact, like the idea of God, altogether transcendent. It is impossible therefore that experience should directly give rise to it at all.

But, it has been urged, the universe cannot have existed for ever, since in that case, at any assigned moment, an infinite time would be completed, and that is impossible. The universe must then have had a beginning and so must have had a First Cause. Well, if this argument were valid, it would apply equally to the existence of God. If *per impossibile* we could transcend experience and contemplate the world from without we might, it has been thought, find that the world had a beginning: but then we should be there and as what should we have to be reckoned? Keeping within experience we can only endlessly regress with no prospect of ever reaching the beginning or of forming any concept of what it was like. On the contrary, say certain physicists, we have empirical evidence of a beginning. But in all cases it will be found, I think, that the beginning affirmed is a purely relative one; and moreover that its affirmation assumes

modern science to be exactly and absolutely, and not merely approximately, true<sup>1</sup>.

There is equally little to support the view of creation as an event that occurred at a finite date in the past, when we attempt to regard it from the side of God as creator. Whatever the reason or motive for creation may have been—and some motive or reason the theist must assume—it seems “absolutely inconceivable,” as W. Hartmann put it, “that a conscious God should wait half an eternity content without a good that ought to be.” If creation means anything, it means something so far involved in the divine essence, that we are entitled to say, as Hegel was fond of saying, that “without the world God is not God.” In calling God the creator then it is simply the world’s dependence on Him that we mean to express. If so, it seems clear that this dependence is not, as commonly maintained, a causal dependence strictly understood. For causation relates to change in existence; but creation regarded from the side of the created is not a change in anything existing. To speak of it as a change in nothing, whereby nothing becomes something, is once again—it seems hardly needful to say—mere thoughtless absurdity. Creation in other words is not to be brought under the category of transeunt causation. Nor can we, regarding it from the side of God, bring it under the category of immanent causation, as being a change in Him, unless indeed we abandon the

<sup>1</sup> Cf., e.g., *The Unseen Universe*, 2nd edn, § 116 and Clifford’s criticism, *Lectures and Essays*, 2nd edn, p. 156; also the article by Professor Arrhenius, ‘Infinity of the Universe,’ *Monist*, vol. xxi. 1911, pp. 161 ff.



position that God is God only as being creative. To say that the world depends on God is tantamount to saying that could God cease to be, the world too would cease to be ; or that if the world should cease to be it would be because God had ceased to be. In other words God is the ground of the world's being, its *ratio essendi*. The notion of 'ground,' it will, I assume, be conceded, is wider than that of cause, which is one of its special forms. a

But we have not yet brought out the full meaning of creation as the theist conceives it. Spinoza, for example, also conceived God to be the ground of the world, but interpreted this relation in a way which the theist cannot accept. Spinoza, as his phrase *Deus sive Natura*, shows, identified the world and God as completely as he identified the properties of a triangle with the triangle itself : the reality of the One meant so much that there was no reality left for the Many at all. For pantheism God is the immanent ground of the world, for deism he is the transcendent ground, for theism he is both. How are we to conceive this twofold relation ? The most hopeful attempt perhaps is that which is nowadays associated with the name of Kant, though it is really, I believe, as old as Plato and recurs continually in ancient and modern philosophy alike. I may call it the theory of intellectual intuition. Our knowledge according to Kant has two stems, both requisite to complete our experience. The one, sensibility, is receptive and passive ; but taken alone it is blind, that is to say it furnishes only the material of knowledge. The other, understanding, is active but yields only the form of knowledge : taken alone it is

empty, its content is abstract. But together these two sources yield what we call phenomenal knowledge ; so far we may, according to Kant, be said to shape Nature, though we do not create it ; our objective knowledge, in other words, is the joint result of the manifold data that we receive and of the discursive synthesis of these which our thought achieves. Reality is first there, is given, and our work—all we are capable of—is to understand it. But now we are to imagine our sensory and passive perception replaced by an active, intellectual 'position,' our discursive synthesis by an original thesis or intuition. The Being to whom this intellectual intuition belongs will be creative ; its objective experience will contain nothing that is merely given to it, but only what is ultimately 'posited' by it : its objects will be not phenomenal but noumenal, not independent manifestations of an Other but the creation of itself.

But the world as presented to us is veritably an Other ; hence the passivity in our perception : we know the world only in this its external relation to us, not as it is in itself ; hence it is phenomenal. Here the distinction, the duality, of subject and object is real. But in intellectual intuition all real difference between being and knowing, thought and thing, seems to have vanished. Such intuition, in fact, implies far more than we ordinarily understand even by omniscience<sup>1</sup>. For as our relative and imperfect knowledge does not *partially* constitute the being of its object, so absolute and perfect knowledge, if merely knowledge, would not, we seem entitled to say, constitute its object completely.

<sup>1</sup> Omniscience, literally taken, is still science, not intuition.

Our partial knowledge of a thing is knowledge of its utterances, attitude and behaviour as they are, for us : hence we call this relative knowledge. But a knowledge of all such characteristics of all things in all their interactions would still only be absolute as knowledge : i.e., it would be as absolute or complete as knowledge can be, which, by its very nature, is essentially relative. It would leave the things themselves still independent as regards their existence, and so would fall short of this intellective intuition wherein, it is supposed, they are not merely known but whereby they exist. Thus then the idea of a transcendent experient, whose standpoint, so to say, is ubiquitous, does not reach to the still more transcendent idea of a creator, of one who is the ground of the objects that he 'knows.'

Moreover immediate experience of another subject is beyond any knowledge that we have or can conceive : in fact it might, I think, be fairly maintained that the very idea involves a contradiction. If now it be further allowed that the actions of free and advancing intelligences make new beginnings possible, imply real initiative, it would follow that even complete and absolute knowledge (or omniscience), as knowledge is ordinarily understood, would still leave every finite subject in the position of an object : each would be known completely as regards its utterances, its objective relations with the rest, but not as it is in itself. But more than this, it will be said, is implied in the divine so-called omniscience as theism understands it : "the Lord seeth not as man seeth ; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart." And why ? "He that keepeth thy soul doth not he

know it'?" Such 'omniscience' in a word presupposes creation; thus it is only for creative intuition that the knowing and the being of objects could be said to be in any sense the same.

But then, so far—on the principle of the identity of indiscernibles—is not this so-called knowledge or intuitive thought of the object as such itself just the object, and is not the object just this so-called knowledge or intuition? In that case what becomes of the divine transcendence on which theism lays such stress? Do not theism and pantheism after all come to the same thing: God is the world and the world is God? But identity, if it is to mean anything, must imply some difference: there is no point, for example, in saying 'This is the same' unless I refer to something experienced previously. The bare, and therefore meaningless, identity of God and World simply leaves us with God only, as in the acosmism of Spinoza; or with World only, as in the 'polite *atheism*' of Schopenhauer. But, it is urged, there is, after all, a difference and one which our own self-consciousness enables us to understand. Here the knower and the known are one and the same, and yet are distinct in so far as the subject is its own object. Moreover self-consciousness is the only form of knowledge that can be in a sense absolute. Knowledge of an Other, so long as the Other is veritably such, must ever be relative and incomplete; whereas we cannot call our consciousness of self merely phenomenal. True, but—as I have already urged in the second lecture<sup>2</sup>—throughout our experience the consciousness of self involves the consciousness of not-self: the two

<sup>1</sup> 1 Sam. xvi. 7; Prov. xxiv. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Lect. II. pp. 30, 41.

being always correlative and coordinate. It does not surprise us then to find certain of the philosophies of the Absolute represent it as coming to self-consciousness in and through consciousness of the world. From such a view it is but a step to a philosophy of the Unconscious, such as v. Hartmann and others have constructed mainly on a Hegelian basis. And we may note by the way, as an odd illustration of extremes meeting, that v. Hartmann's 'clairvoyance of the Unconscious' or 'Over-conscious' is but a bad setting of the old idea of intellectual intuition<sup>1</sup>. The attempt, therefore, to equate creation regarded as intellectual intuition with a pure or absolute self-consciousness—if this were conceivable—will not avail for theism: it leaves no room for the divine transcendence and without this the distinctness of God and the world and the dependence of the world on God both alike disappear. Our result so far then is simply this: neither absolute knowledge nor absolute self-consciousness can take the place of the idea of creation; and therefore, if the notion of intellectual intuition or real intuitive understanding is to help us, we must find more in the activity which it after all implies than thought or knowledge of any sort will cover; and also more than such identity as self-knowing and self-known implies.

We may discern perhaps a faint and distant analogy, one suggesting a better interpretation, in what we are wont to style the creations of genius. We never apply this phrase to the most marvellous discoveries in science or the most fruitful inventions in

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps too Bergson's *élan vital* is but another variant of this idea.

the technical arts : " nobody, I fancy, would say that Newton created gravitation or that Gutenberg created printing. It Newton had not discovered gravitation some one else would, and as for printing we know that it was invented more than once. But it is common to speak of such works as the *Antigone* of Sophocles, Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Michael Angelo's *Moses*, Raphael's *Sistine Madonna* or Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* as creations; and we feel pretty confident that if their authors had not produced them they would never have been produced. This approximation to the divine that we find in the originality of genius leads us often to speak of its 'creations' as inspired. In the case of discoveries and inventions we realise that sense and intellect, the receptive and active factors, are both concerned; but the immortal works of art, the things of beauty that are a joy for ever, we regard as rather the spontaneous output of productive imagination, of a free spirit that embodies itself in its work, lives in it and loves it. Yet however much the man of genius loves his work and lives in it, he is still distinct from it, still greater than it. On the other hand, however dependent on him is his production, though he knows it through and through, yet it too is distinct from him : from its first inception, even in the full tide of his activity, he feels that it is working itself out and sees that it is good; in other words he finds himself expressed in it and he respects his work.

Yet after all, as we have allowed, this analogy is very imperfect, and it is just in the important point where it fails that our difficulties with the idea of intellectual intuition begin. Between what we may

call relative creation, the origination of something relatively new within the world, and the absolute creation of the world itself there is an impassable gulf. The one presupposes experience previously acquired, the other is coeval and identical with the divine experience itself. God in short is the Absolute Genius—the World-Genius, as he has been called. Any analogy drawn from our experience must then be inadequate to such an experience: God's ways are not as our ways nor his thoughts as our thoughts. But the difference lies simply in transcending the limit to which our experience points but can never attain: it need not imply utter disparity. We may perhaps safely assume that the distinction of will and presentation is applicable to the divine experience as well as to our own; and also that there too they are equally inseparable. At any rate we cannot say that volition precedes presentation nor that presentation precedes volition; that the subject is first nor yet that the object is, nor finally that both are originally undifferentiated<sup>1</sup>. If so, we cannot then represent 'creation as starting with a blind will to create followed by a discursive selection of the best possible plan of creation; nor as starting with a dialectic development of the only possible plan followed by the resolve to let it be. It is at once 'pure activity' and 'original insight,' idea and deed, life and light. ✓ God is transcendent to it, for it is not God, but his utterance and manifestation; and yet, because it is *his* utterance and because he ever sustains it, he is immanent in it, it is his continuous creation.

So then at last the theist is bound to admit that

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Lect. ix. p. 199.

this conception of God-and-the-world is beyond us : we can assign it no beginning and so we say it is 'eternal' : we can find no ground for it and so we say it is the Absolute. At the same time we have to remember that the pluralist's position is no better, nay we must acknowledge, I think that it is not so good. He too has to assume an endless regress for the world. For him too there is something groundless and therefore absolute, but it is the totality of a Many in their interaction regarded as the ultimate reality. Of this plurality in unity he can give no account beyond saying that it is just this, and that it is there. As I have already said this position cannot—so far as I see—be charged with inherent inconsistency ; but it is incomplete and unsatisfying. A plurality of beings primarily independent as regards their existence and yet always mutually acting and reacting upon each other, an ontological plurality that is yet somehow a cosmological unity, seems clearly to suggest some ground beyond itself. The idea of God presents itself to meet this lack. The Many depend upon God for their existence though still dependent on each other as regards their experience. The idea of God would then be meaningless, unless God were regarded as transcending the Many ; so there can be no talk of God as merely *primus inter pares*. On the other hand it would be equally meaningless to talk of God apart from the Many. A God that was not a Creator, a God whose creatures had no independence, would not himself be really a God. Herein theism differs from thorough-going singularism or absolutism. A theism that is reached through pluralism can never end in an Absolute in which God



and the World alike were absorbed and lost : the only Absolute then that we can admit is the Absolute which God and the World constitute.

And yet the tendency of theism to pass over into singularism is notorious and we have noted it again and again. How may we account for this? It follows partly, no doubt, from the besetting sin of speculative thinking to hypostatize abstractions—hence the so-called ‘abstract monism’ or acosmism, of which Spinoza furnished the type. Partly it is the result of a religious spirit of self-abasement, self-abnegation, as in certain forms of Indian and Christian mysticism. But in large measure it is due to the difficulties in the idea of creation itself. We say God and the World constitute the Absolute; but if God is the absolute ground of the World is not God alone after all the real Absolute? In this question there lurks perhaps the error of concreting abstractions just now mentioned. If there were no world, God would cease to be the ground of it. He would still be the potential ground, it will be replied perhaps. But if he were only this, do we not require some further condition—some restraint to be withdrawn or some external impulse to supervene before the world can become actual? Or, if not that, are we not then driven to conceive God as not actually being all that it is his nature to be—if such an expression is allowable? But no, the

<sup>1</sup> “’Tis an established maxim...that an object which exists for any time in its full perfection without producing another, is not its sole cause; but is assisted by some other principle, which pushed it from its state of inactivity.” Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature*, Green and Grose’s edn, vol. 1. p. 378.

objector may persist, if God is the absolute ground of the world—even granting that his creation has no time limits, still—the world cannot possibly, without ceasing to be created, share with him the title of Absolute. The more clearly we realise the entire and complete dependence that creation implies the more flagrantly absurd will such a claim appear. Even the potter may find the clay not ideally plastic; indeed the artistic creator at his best meets with some limitation in his material. For God there can be none, which is all that is meant by the phrase ‘creation out of nothing.’

To this we may reply :—No theist can pretend that the world is coordinate with God : the divine transcendence is essential to the whole theistic position. No theist again assumes that creation involves external limitation. But the point is that if creation is to have any meaning it implies internal limitation. It is from the reality of the world that we start : if this is denied, the divine transcendence becomes meaningless, nay, God, as the ideal of the pure reason, sinks to a mere illusion within an illusion. On the other hand, if the reality of the world be admitted, then this reality stands over against the reality of God. God indeed has not been limited from without but he has limited himself.

But now new difficulties emerge. Self-limitation seems to imply a prior state in which it was absent, whereas a limitation held to be permanent—as we hold creation to be—suggests some ultimate dualism rather than an ultimate unity. Such an objection is in keeping with our ordinary experience confined as that is to

temporal processes, but it is not applicable to the notion of an absolute ground ; as a trivial example may suffice to show. The sides of a triangle are independent of its angles only if regarded merely as lines, and yet they are the ground of the angles ; also in forming these they limit themselves in so far as they thereby determine their several ratios. We do not say that God comes into being with the world, but only that as ground of the world he limits himself : duality in unity is implied here as in all experience, but not dualism.

But how, it may be asked, can self-limitation be involved in creation, if creation is pure activity and original intuition, if God is all life and all light ? How can God be omnipotent, as theism ordinarily assumes, and yet be limited ? Well, in the first place, we might reply, an omnipotent being that could not limit itself would hardly deserve the name of God ; would, in fact, be only a directionless energy of unlimited amount. At the same time the Mosaic notion that God must needs rest from his labour and even Tertullian's bold assertion that his glory was the greater on this account, nobody nowadays, I suppose, would seriously defend. It is not any limitation of this sort that we have primarily in view. *All* determination is negation, that is limitation, we must say with Spinoza. But if God were what Hegel described Nature as being, *ein bacchantischer Gott, der sich selbst nicht zügelt und fasst*, then indeed we might regard him as the Absolute notwithstanding possible creational vagaries, but he would be the absolutely Indeterminate. But God according to the theistic idea does not repudiate but

owns and respects his world, a world that is cosmic, not chaotic, from the first, and through which we may believe that one increasing purpose runs. Even men abide by their pledges, cherish their offspring, show steadfastness and consistency in their purposes, and in manifold other ways limit and determine themselves by their own deeds. By their deeds, yes ; but not by their dreams. We surely then cannot suppose that God is less earnest, less steadfast than his creatures : rather we regard him as without variableness or shadow of a turning. Again, to argue that unless the world is merely a divine phantasy, God is determined by its existence, does less than justice to the pluralist's position : it is from the reality of the world that we start. Apart from this, I must again insist, we have no basis for our ideal of God at all.

There still remains of course the difficulty, which from the outset we have allowed to be insuperable : *how* God creates the world and thereby limits himself we can never understand<sup>1</sup>. The idea of creation, like the idea of God, we admit is altogether transcendent. But—paradoxical though it may seem—this admission in a sense explains and removes our difficulty. Even if the idea of creation be valid, we must necessarily fail to understand the process, just because that cannot fall within our experience ; on the other hand any process that we could understand could not be the creative process, because it would fall within our experience. This may sound very like a final surrender ; for what, it may be urged, is the use of a hypothesis that can never be directly verified ? Nevertheless this objection rests on

<sup>1</sup> See Supplementary Note II.

a complete failure to understand the function of philosophy. A scientific hypothesis is directly verifiable; because the facts which it is framed to unify, simplify, or explain, fall within experience, and this is sure therefore sooner or later to furnish a crucial test of its validity. But philosophy is not science—though it is bound to be systematic and methodical—for it deals not with parts or aspects of experience in isolation but with experience as a concrete whole. To this whole it must appeal to justify its ‘ideas’; and they are justified in proportion as they enable us to conceive this whole as a complete and systematic unity. The pluralist halts at the Many and their interaction: he declines to go further because he finds no direct warrant for so doing. But if the idea of creation will carry us further, and if nothing else will, then that idea, it is maintained, is rationally justified though it be not empirically verified.

## LECTURE XII.

### THE COSMOLOGY OF THEISM.

The idea of creation, we have allowed, must in any case lead to modifications of the pluralistic *Weltanschauung*. But it is questionable if these modifications need to be as radical as most theists assume. To these differences and their possible reconciliation we have now to turn.

Pluralism and theism are—nowadays at all events—both monistic: for neither, is the distinction between person and thing, matter and mind, an ultimate distinction. For both alike, material phenomena are only the manifestation of minds, of so-called ‘things *per se*.’ These however are not literally things at all, but beings that are beings for themselves, i.e.—in the widest sense of the term—persons, who are conative and cognitive in varying degrees. But whereas pluralism regards all material phenomena as due to the direct interaction of such persons or monads, reduces the entire course of the world, in short, without reservation, to such interaction; theism usually attributes material phenomena to the direct and orderly intervention of God, who in this way provides a medium and instrumentality for the mutual intercourse and understanding of his creatures. Of the former position we have taken

the Leibnizian monadology as the type, discarding however the doctrine of 'pre-established harmony,' as Wolf and others did, who attempted to systematise Leibniz's philosophy. Of the latter position, we have typical instances in the occasionalism of Berkeley or of Lotze in his later views; they agree in referring matter or the so-called mechanism of nature to the immanent activity of God himself. Such theism then, it will be readily seen, assumes two apparently quite distinct forms of divine activity: first, the creative and sustaining activity, whereby the finite Many exist, and secondly the continuous mediation whereby they are brought into living relation with each other. In proceeding then to examine what we might call the Cosmology of theism, the general theory of occasionalism comes up for consideration first of all.

This theory, originated to bridge over the gulf that the Cartesian dualism had made between mind and matter, contributed in the end to that denial of the independent reality of matter altogether, which is common to all forms of spiritualistic monism or idealism and was in fact implicit in the teaching of Descartes himself. At first all that was asserted was, that since the utter disparateness of matter and mind rendered any direct influence of one on the other impossible, their seeming interaction must be due solely to the 'assistance' or intervention of the Creator of both. It was however still assumed that bodies causally and immediately affected each other. But as the consequences of the entire inertness assigned to matter came to be realised, and our own voluntary activity came to be regarded as the prime source of our sense of power, the theory

of occasionalism underwent a corresponding change. The idea of God as mediating between mind and matter gave place to the simpler idea of God as mediating between finite minds, the so-called material world being regarded no longer as the means by which this mediation was effected, but rather as the actual fact of this mediation itself. This is the form of occasionalism that was maintained by Berkeley and Lotze. This also we find already in germ within Descartes' own system<sup>1</sup>; and it was so far developed by the Cartesian Malebranche that a disciple of his, Arthur Collier, is said by his biographer to have anticipated the Berkeleian position by several years<sup>2</sup>.

At the outset too, as its name suggests, occasionalism implied the continuous interposition of the Deity in each and all of the innumerable cases of apparent interaction ceaselessly occurring throughout the entire universe. Against such a view Leibniz brought the charge of perpetual miracle, of irrational recourse to a *Deus ex machina*; and the objection is commonly regarded as fatal. Well, no doubt intervention in the affairs of a multitude of distinct and unique beings does for us imply a corresponding multiplicity of separate acts; and the thought of such a multiplex—so to say discursive—intervention is to us utterly bewildering. But for God, who is to be conceived as omniscient, the case is altogether different. For God, as its common Creator, the world is one whole: however much differentiated, it never for him loses its meaning and therefore never lacks its intuited unity.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. e.g. his sixth Meditation.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Fraser's edition of *Berkeley's Works*, 1st edn, vol. I. p. 253.



For God there is no exclusive standpoint and therefore no need to hurry hither and thither, attending now to this, now to that. Further, since continuity is the common characteristic of the growth and development of all his creatures alike<sup>1</sup>, his compensatory adjustments, the supposed means of their interaction, will also be continuous and orderly. They may exhibit the regularity of increasing purpose rather than the rigidity of fixed mechanism, but at least they will be compatible with the idea of Law, of orderly control.

But to talk of a *Deus ex machina* in such a case is to assume that there is some independent system to get tangled up into knots, to forget that Nature for the theist just is this continuous mediation of the Divine and not a mechanism independent of it. Again to call this a perpetual miracle, if that means more than a subject for perpetual wonder and admiration, is equally absurd. The fact is that Leibniz's own theory of pre-established harmony does not differ so much from occasionalism as is often supposed. Bayle pointed this out long ago and the resemblance has often been

<sup>1</sup> Thus it cannot be objected that a man might, for example, will to fly, and that, therefore there could be no orderliness in the world if God simply gave effect to whatever might be willed. In truth, however, a man cannot will to fly, and the mere *wish* to fly entails no change of attitude, no actual conation. Still he might possibly try to fly; but then his first attempt would start from his *status quo*. But what can a finite being will to do, more generally what is such a being always striving for? For self-conservation and self-betterment, we say; but this again carries us back to the *status quo*. There will then be a certain continuity in the actions of each and all such beings, and so there will also be a corresponding continuity in that mediating activity of God which we ordinarily summarise as the uniformity of Nature. *Natura non facit saltus*.

noticed since. If we figure to ourselves two badly-made clocks (*'horloges méchantes'*), and imagine the clockmaker continually interfering to correct their faulty adjustment—and this is Leibniz's caricature of occasionalism—then indeed the objection to miraculous meddling would be in place. But the whole point is that there are not two clocks. To call Nature—the only clock there is, if there is a clock at all—a perpetual miracle is to ignore the fact that a permanent miracle is a contradiction in terms. For theism, when it is thought out, there is however not even one clock: to attribute to God the need or even the use of organs or instruments is but childish anthropomorphism<sup>1</sup>. “Il n'y a point d'autre nature, je veux dire d'autres lois naturelles, que les volontés efficaces du tout-puissant,” said Malebranche.

Nevertheless the term occasionalism will always tend to suggest the part played by a broker, middleman or 'go-between' in human affairs; and this, it will be felt, is no worthy *rôle* to assign to the divine being. And yet such an objection is due simply to misunderstanding. It would be just as reasonable to maintain that to create finite beings at all is unworthy of the Infinite. So long as creation implies mediation—and this is the usual theistic position—the two activities, however distinct, are in fact inseparable, the one being consequential on the other, and both together resulting in one complete cosmos. We find the life and intercourse of finite beings to depend on two things, first on their organisms, and secondly on their environments: these together make up the one whole we commonly

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Naturalism and Agnosticism*, 3rd edn, vol. II. pp. 274 f.

speak of as the physical or material world. And so in virtue of the continuity between any given organism and its environment—that is, eventually, the whole material world—we may regard this as itself the organism common to all living things alike, the universal matrix within which their several individual organisms are differentiated but not separated. Again, as the several individual organisms, as the very term itself implies, constitute the instrumentality of the sentient agents or persons to whom they belong; so we may say that the entire material world is in like manner the common possession or medium of life and intercourse for them, the only truly active beings. According to the cosmology of theism, in short, the physical world is simply a system of means provided for the sake of the realm of ends: it is only to be understood as subservient to them, and apart from them is alike meaningless and worthless.

But though the existence of the material world is not dependent on us but is rather on this view the medium on which we ourselves depend, though it is indispensable as a system of means for us, we cannot from this conclude that it is in the same sense indispensable for God. We are not, in other words, justified in assuming that the realm of ends is created conformably to a prior system of means, life being primarily adjusted to matter, not matter to life. The creations of finite minds are, it is true, subject to material trammels, the exigencies of rhyme and metre, the small range of luminosity in pigments, the intractable nature of marble or bronze, and so forth. But we cannot suppose either that the divine creation is

necessarily beset by limits of this kind or that God has arbitrarily limited the world of living forms by a pre-ordained world of lifeless stuff. The creative activity is then, the theist holds, only the condition of, not at all conditioned by, the mediating activity; and the unity and purpose of the former as a realm of ends involves and determines the law and order of the latter as a system of means.

But do we need thus to distinguish between ends and means, between creative activity and mediating activity? Does the idea of creation necessarily imply what we may call a unified and systematic occasionalism? If the interpretation of interaction towards which pluralism seems to tend is possible and sufficient, we certainly may answer this question in the negative. There may, in fact, be such a divine system or economy embracing and encircling the living agents of the world, furnishing, as it were, the properties and the scenery in which these *dramatis personae* of history enact their parts. Such subsidiary aids, I say, may exist, but according to the pluralist view they are not necessary. But can the pluralist position be thought out? Why can it not, it may be replied, if it requires nothing more than the sort of mutual understanding or *rapprochement* which we daily observe in the personal intercourse of our fellow-men? "As in water face answereth to face so the heart of man to man." Of course such mutual understanding is approximately complete only between persons similarly situated and similar in their interests and pursuits, who can thus become—as we aptly say—intimate with each other. It tails off rapidly in our intercourse with strangers, and tends to dwindle away

altogether as we pass to creatures further and further removed from us in the scale of being. You may train a dog to fetch and carry, but it is useless to tell a fly not to settle on your nose: like Milton's mariner disembarking on the leviathan's back, he takes you to be *terra firma*. Yet the flies understand each other and glide about in airy mazes without colliding.

But it will be said, both flies and men have organisms, and without these their mutual adjustments of behaviour would be altogether inexplicable, and it is just this interaction by means of physical organization that is the problem<sup>1</sup>. This is true and the pluralist is fully aware of it. It was Leibniz himself, the founder of modern pluralism, who said that "a disembodied soul would be a deserter from the general order, which implies matter and movement and their laws<sup>2</sup>." But the question is: What is matter? More exactly stated: What is the simplest concept of matter to which we are led, setting out from the realm of ends as the reason of its existence? We note then, first, that for Leibniz, as for his modern successors, any given organism itself consists of organisms, which for it are organs, having special functions and working consentiently together as members of this one whole. This however implies an indefinite—Leibniz even said, an infinite—regress. But for the modern pluralist all it means, I take it, is that we cannot assume any given organism that seems simple, to be so really; but that, none the less, since the complex involves the simple, bare—or as Leibniz called them, naked—monads must exist. And now

<sup>1</sup> See Supplementary Note III.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Philosophische Schriften*, Gerhardt's edn, vol. vi. p. 546.

how are we to conceive such a bare monad? It cannot be a dominant monad, for this would imply subordinate monads: it cannot therefore have a body distinct from itself. In some sense then it would seem, it must be its own body or disappear altogether from the universal connexion of things. But we must not understand this to mean that apparently all mental characteristics are gone and only material characteristics are left. The true solution seems rather to be that we have reached the limit of both. The physical concept of such a limit is the dynamical concept of a mass-point as a centre of force. The corresponding psychological concept answers to what Leibniz happily described as *mens momentanea seu carens recordatione*<sup>1</sup>.

Some elucidation of both these concepts is requisite before we can attempt to formulate the conclusion to which this regress points. Leibniz spoke of monads generally as "the *real* atoms of nature, and in a word, the elements of things." Such language, which seems specially appropriate to his naked monads, should be sufficient to put us on our guard against identifying them with the mass-points of the modern physicist—which Leibniz held to be only phenomenal. They are more analogous to Boscovich's centres of force<sup>2</sup>:

<sup>1</sup> *Theoriae motus abstracti Definitiones*, Gerhardt's edition of his philosophical works, vol. iv. p. 230.

<sup>2</sup> It is worthy of remark, that notwithstanding this analogy, to which Boscovich himself refers, he was so far from identifying monads and centres of force as to maintain that the 'seat of the soul' is more or less extended. Cf. his *Philosophiae naturalis Theoria*, Venice, 1763, Appendix, *De Anima et Deo*, §§ 536 ff. It is also worthy of passing notice that it was through Boscovich that Priestley was led to his so-called materialism.

although they differ from these in being all qualitatively distinct, or unique, like Herbart's reals, not all qualitatively the same, as Boscovich's elements were<sup>1</sup>. But they resemble these in another respect and that a very important one. Boscovich conceived his simple atoms as acting at a distance, which—paradoxical though it sounds—really means interacting directly without any intervening medium, doing, in fact, what according to the Newtonian mechanics is inconceivable. This immediacy of interaction is held to characterize the bare monad of the modern pluralist, the monad that is, so to say, its own body. Such interaction implies what Lotze called a sympathetic *rappor*t.

This brings us to the psychical nature of the bare monad, and here again immediacy is the thing we have specially to note. This immediacy answers to what psychologists now call pure sensation, an ideal limit to which *our* simplest experiences never descend: our sensations correspond rather to complexes or syntheses of the elemental sensations or '*petites perceptions*' of Leibniz. Moreover, for *us* it is true that all cognition is recognition, implies assimilation, and therefore memory in the widest sense, i.e. the retention of what has been either inherited or acquired. Pure sensation or cognition is the 'momentary consciousness' of some *datum*, the perception or recognition of which, on the other hand, would presuppose previous experiences that still in some sense endure. Clear evidence of such a 'psychical' or enduring present is only found in connexion with comparatively complex organisms, and

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *op. cit.* § 3, quoted also by Fechner, *Atomenlehre*, 2nd edn, p. 240.

this range in time is found also to increase as the biological differentiation of the organism increases. When then, on the contrary, we imagine this complexity decreased without limit, we reach the concept of the bare monad whose organism, so to say, reduces to a point, and its present to a moment; which can only react immediately and to what is immediately given. In other words such monads deal only with their environment and, so long as they gain nothing by experience, so long, that is, as they remain bare monads, they severally deal with it always in the same way. The existence of an indefinite number of such monads would provide all the 'uniform medium' for the intercourse of higher monads that these can require, without any need for such divine intervention as occasionalism assumes.

The precise details of this psychical intercourse the pampsychist is unable to specify. But it is questionable whether—notwithstanding this—the occasionalist with his apparent psychophysical interaction is not in a worse position; for he only dispenses with the need for any specification by assuming what we may call a 'dualism' in the divine activity, and that to many minds will always appear too cumbrous and, so to say, unscientific, to be intellectually satisfactory. And after all the main outline of the pampsychic alternative can be clearly stated. The relation of a dominant monad (*A*) to any monad of its organism (or of its brain, when its organism is so far differentiated,) is different in kind from the relation to the same monad of the dominant monad (*B*) of another organism. The one relation we may call an internal, functional, or vital, the other an



external, foreign, or physical, relation. The totality of these internal relations at a given time answers to *A*'s objective experience at that moment. Certain changes in this whole are, so far as *A* is concerned, initiated by certain of the subordinate monads: these changes answer to *A*'s sensations, and as to these it is receptive or passive. Certain other changes, on the other hand, are due to *A*'s active initiative: these entail sensations in certain subordinate monads, and their response is what we call *A*'s movement<sup>1</sup>.

But the monads of *A*'s organism are not, we have said, related exclusively to it and to each other. If that were the case, the organism would fail altogether of its purpose and meaning: its existence at all would be inexplicable, unless it were an absolute whole and self-maintaining. In fact, however, these subordinate monads are related also to the environment, which we have called the common organism or matrix of all monads. This in the last resort is conceived as consisting of bare monads, which have only external relations to one another, or rather for which, as the limit of our regress, the distinction of internal and external ceases to hold. What is true of *A*'s organism is true also of *B*'s, and so we can understand how *A*'s acts may give rise to sensations in *B* through this double mediation of organism and environment and how *B*'s acts in turn may give rise to sensations in *A*. Presently as like sensations (or receipts) recur they become gradually more and more assimilated with previous experiences of them and the advance to definite percepts\*.

<sup>1</sup> See Supplementary Note III.

is made. What were originally only immediate sensory data have now a meaning<sup>1</sup>; *A* and *B*, that is to say, are *en rapport*. *Pari passu* with advancing experience we find also increasing complexity of organization: functions originally controlled by the dominant monad then devolve upon subordinate organisms or organs, and so habitual or secondarily automatic processes, which for the dominant monad lapse into subconsciousness, arise and extend. Thus the process of mediation, *once begun*, tends continually to increase; and so, as the range of an individual's experience extends, he knows more and more of the external world, and yet is ever further removed from that immediate relation with it which psychologists call pure sensation.

Both the pampsychist and the occasionalist alike agree, as we have seen, in holding all real existence to consist in experients and their experience; they agree too, we may assume, in accepting the current psychological analysis of experience into presentation, feeling and action. But in interpreting presentations as subjective modifications, assumed to be due directly to the divine activity, occasionalism becomes hampered with all the epistemological difficulties of what is known as subjective idealism, difficulties which made the existence of the external world such a hopeless problem for modern philosophers till Reid began to clear the way by his criticism of the Cartesian 'theory of ideas.'

<sup>1</sup> Thanks to the 'creative synthesis' which the processes of recognition and perception imply. (Cf. Lect. v. pp. 104 f.) But in so far as they affect their subject even bare sensations always have a meaning, i.e. a value as pleasurable or painful. This is 'meaning' in a most vital sense.

Leibniz's famous paradox that, although they mirror the universe, the monads have no windows, is but another way of stating this theory. Modern pluralists on the other hand maintain that all monads have windows—more literally stated, that presentation is a relation among monads not a subjective state in a single monad. And this 'natural realism,' as Hamilton called it<sup>1</sup>, is so much the simpler hypothesis—if that can be called a hypothesis which claims to be the bare statement of the facts—that we may say with some confidence that occasionalism would never have been heard of but for the Cartesian dualism of matter and mind and the Cartesian theory of ideas as subjective states. That God should have created the monads without windows and taken on himself the function of supplying their place—whether continuously, as the occasionalists assumed, or once for all, as Leibniz held—seems then a needless complication.

Nevertheless, since we cannot actually verify the indefinite regress which the existence of bare monads implies, and since we cannot show that the indirect mediation of our finite intercourse is not a fact, we have no means of deciding empirically between the two alternatives. The most we can say is that the pluralist alternative is the *prior* as well as the simpler, and it seems adequate. To the objection that it reduces theism to the level of mere deism and leaves the world once started to go of itself, it is sufficient to reply that this supposed tenet of deism is really inconceivable. As we have already seen, the idea of creation by simple

<sup>1</sup> Albeit in his own version of it he halts and trims in very half-hearted fashion.

'fiat' at a definite epoch will not work; but deism on any other view is reduced to atheism. If there is a Creator at all he can never stand aside and wholly apart from his world. As Lotze has well said, such a proceeding "is intelligible in a human artificer who leaves his work when it is finished and trusts for its maintenance to universal laws of Nature, laws which he did not himself make, and which not he, but another for him, maintains in operation"; but "the picture of God withdrawing from the world," the sole ground of which is himself, is incomprehensible<sup>1</sup>.

But, it may be urged further, the sense-symbolism of Berkeley serves not only as a medium of intercourse for God's sentient creatures but it is also at the same time a revelation of God himself, is the language wherein he addresses us<sup>2</sup>. Granted that as an independent argument the appeal to the teleology of Nature is not decisive, still if there is a Creator, as we are now assuming, he must surely somehow manifest himself. But may we not reply: Surely if there is a Creator, the world of his interacting creatures will itself be a clearer manifestation of him than a mere medium of intercourse, alike available for very diverse ends and alike indifferent to all? The two seem to stand in

<sup>1</sup> But the ascription of such a tenet to deists generally—to the English deists of the 18th century, for example—is a grievous misrepresentation. What they denied was not the divine immanence *in toto*, but only such occasionalistic interference as miracles, special revelations and special providences imply. They were in fact what we should now call rationalistic theists.

<sup>2</sup> Physical catastrophes are a serious difficulty for the theist on this view. Cf. a striking article by Professor Howison, 'Catastrophes and the Moral Order,' *Hibbert Journal*, vol. 1. 1902, pp. 114-121.

much the same position as grammar to literature. Accordingly the theists who set out by distinguishing the realm of Nature from the realm of Ends allow that it is the latter that reveals God the more clearly and impressively. If so, the case for theism can hardly be impaired should this distinction turn out to be unnecessary. But after all, it will be rejoined, your analogy between language and literature is rather unfortunate, since literature presupposes language. In the abstract perhaps it does, but not in actual fact, in so far as all utterance has some meaning. It is precisely the absolute distinction of means and ends that is denied. So far then we seem entitled to conclude that while both alternatives are compatible with theism the thorough-going pampsychism of the pluralist which dispenses with a distinct medium of intercourse is, as simpler, so far preferable to occasionalism for which a mediating activity is essential.

But as yet we have considered mainly the structural or, as the favourite phrase used to be, the statical aspect of the world: let us now turn to consider more directly its functional or dynamical aspect. Here again the pampsychical or Leibnizian seems preferable to the occasionalistic alternative. We must in any case admit that what we commonly call inorganic or physical processes precede and underlie those which all alike recognise as the processes in which life and mind are undoubtedly manifest. We must, that is, to say, acknowledge that Nature is *die Vorstufe des Geistes*, the prelude to Mind, in so far as so-called physical processes invariably introduce those that are distinctly psychical. If so, then, when life and mind

appear, have we not a break in the course of evolution—have we not that *generatio æquivoca* of something wholly new, to which the most infelicitous name imaginable is often given, viz. 'the spontaneous generation' of the living by the lifeless? But this naturalistic assumption is rejected by the theists who accept the occasionalistic distinction between nature and spirit. "I should certainly never," says Lotze, "set any one the task out of ten elements to make an eleventh arise equally real with them"—a curious understatement, by the way, of the enormous assumption involved in the naturalistic theory of life. "It is not from them"—the inorganic elements, Lotze continues, "that...the substance of the soul would spring; nor would it arise above them or between them, or by the side of them, out of nothing. It would be a new creature, produced by the one encompassing Being from its own nature as *the supplement of its physical activity there and then operating*<sup>1</sup>." In thus speaking of the Absolute as "giving to every organism its fitting soul" Lotze seems to invert our ordinary notions of the relation of the two in the very way to which we had just now to object<sup>2</sup>. We do not talk of fitting inhabitants to their houses but of fitting houses to their inhabitants. Lotze's language reminds one of Herbert Spencer's view that when the organism becomes too complex to work automatically consciousness comes to its rescue. Yet Lotze was perfectly clear as to the relative importance of the two, as the following sentence may suffice to show: "Nor again is it out of nothing that the soul is created...; but to satisfy the phantasy we may say,

<sup>1</sup> *Metaphysic*, § 251 *fin*. Italics mine.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. above, p. 252.

it is from itself, from its own real nature, that the Absolute sets free (*entlässt*) the soul, and so adds to its one activity, the course of nature, that other which, according to the prescriptive meaning of the Absolute, is its completion<sup>1</sup>."

Now for the downright dualist, who ascribes reality to matter and to mind alike, this priority of the course of nature to the evolution of life and mind, which it somehow helps to bring about, is conceivable at the outset at any rate; and it is moreover what facts themselves in the first instance suggest. That such dualism turns out to be eventually an unworkable hypothesis is in the meantime nothing to the point. But for the monist—who is aware of the *impasse* to which dualism leads and who is therefore prepared to recognise in the so-called course of nature, as distinct from the realm of ends, "only a system of occasions or means for producing presentations in spiritual beings<sup>2</sup>"—for the monist, I say, to suppose nevertheless that this system is maintained by the divine activity, when as yet there are no spiritual subjects to benefit by it; nay, to suppose further that this system is actually itself not so much a means adapted to them but rather a means to which they are adapted—surely this is a *ὑστερον πρότερον* not easy to match. It seems to imply a need for instrumentality, which—as I have already said—contradicts the whole notion of a Creator. May we not then conclude that when in Hegelian fashion people talk of *die Natur als Vorstufe des Geistes*, what is meant is not that there is a breach of evolutionary continuity but simply that the level of *self-conscious*

<sup>1</sup> *Op cit.* § 246 *fn.*

<sup>2</sup> Lotze, *op. cit.* § 97.

existence, of Spirit in the narrower sense, is reached continuously by development through earlier stages of more or less conscious life?

The question then which we have next to raise concerns what in an earlier lecture was called the lower limit of pluralism : in other words : What do we ultimately reach when we try to trace the process of evolution backwards? And our chief concern will now be to ascertain, if we can, the theistic interpretation of this initial situation or ideal limit, to which we attempt to regress. Herbert Spencer, it will be remembered, maintained that what we should ultimately reach would be a state of homogeneity and that from such a state, in consequence of its essential instability, all the heterogeneity that we now find has been gradually evolved. And, on the supposition that evolution will explain everything, he reasoned correctly enough ; for, since what we now observe is continually increasing heterogeneity, this seems fairly to suggest an original state in which there was no heterogeneity at all. Leibniz and the modern pluralists on the other hand, as we know, while admitting homogeneity in so far as no two monads are altogether different, yet contend for the presence of heterogeneity throughout : no two monads or ' reals,' according to them, are or ever were altogether alike. If now we try to imagine all these in their initial condition we seem to reach a world of bare monads, since all the processes of organization fall within the scope of evolution, not of origin. But bare monads, we have seen, are described as having only a momentary consciousness without memory and as so far incapable of acquiring *by* experience : how then



from such an initial condition can the evolution of experience ever begin? Can the bare monad acquire experience?

The pluralist, like Herbert Spencer, starts with a certain initial instability. But he gives a better account of it: describing it not in terms of matter but in terms of mind. Even his bare monads are conative, that is are feeling and striving subjects or persons in the widest sense, not inert particles or things. Even so it would be conceivable, of course, that every one existed in a certain neutral state that called for no efforts of self-conservation; and then, unless we could credit some at least with impulses towards self-betterment, nothing would happen. Anyhow, as a matter of fact, some things have happened. In the course of these changes, it is assumed that certain monads come into relations that, as mutually helpful, they tend to maintain. At the same time to this comparative intimacy within a group there corresponds a comparative differentiation—for each member of it—between such group and the world of monads at large; and with this differentiation within the present there arises *pari passu* an increase in its duration as conscious present; so change is perceived, and plasticity tends to become memory. It is needless to reproduce in further detail the pluralistic *Weltanschauung*, which I have attempted to describe in earlier lectures: what now interests us is the interpretation or modification that theism has to impose.

But first it will be well to recall what theism as such in any case implies, viz. that the initial state, from which pluralism seeks to start as a fact, finds in God

its ground and reason. The bare existence of reality in the plural, it may be argued, seems no more to demand a ground than its bare existence in the singular. But when the Many, regarded as existentially independent, are found to be mutually complementary, conspiring together to realise an intelligible organic whole, then the presence from the first of an underlying unity suggests itself. Why should the Many tend towards one end unless they had in the One their source? Otherwise, the further we attempt to regress must we not allow that the more inconceivable a supreme end becomes<sup>1</sup>? Those who decline to accept theism may either leave such questions unanswered, maintaining that for the world's evolution as ultimate there can be no sufficient reason other than the fact itself; or they may fall back on an Absolute in which the distinction of God and world disappears. The former of these alternatives ignores two things: that we as rational beings are part of the world's evolution, and that the demand for a sufficient reason is thus a demand that the world itself has raised. The latter reduces the world to an inexplicable appearance which, somehow seeming to be there, it can only explain away.

There is indeed another possible course, viz. to deny that things show any tendency towards the realisation of an organic whole or that the world is a single realm of ends at all. Chance, it may be said, would suffice to account for all the mutual compatibility that we find: in a manifold of indefinite extent we might expect indefinitely many coincidences. In such a supposition there is a covert appeal to the unknown

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Lect. ix. p. 197.

that is specially out of place in such ultra-radical empiricism. In the world that we know there is, as the pluralist himself assumes, that amount of unity which every plurality in order to be known necessarily involves. This world, moreover, in the course of its development has already advanced some way towards what we have called a higher unity, and at the stage of self-conscious reason has adopted this unity as its ideal goal. For these facts the theistic hypothesis furnishes an adequate explanation and so far no other or better is known or even wanted. We may then resume our inquiry: how does theism interpret that lower limit, towards which the pluralist attempts to trace all evolution back?

There can be no doubt, I think, that the hypothesis of evolution was foreign at any rate to modern theories of creation. Thus we find even the deist Voltaire preferred to account for the fossil shells found on mountain slopes by the passage of pilgrims who dropped them there, rather than admit the theories of the new science of geology. "Nothing of all that vegetates, nothing of all that is animated," he wrote, "has changed: all species have remained invariably the same: it would indeed be strange that the grain of millet should have conserved its nature eternally and that the nature of the entire globe should have varied<sup>1</sup>." But nowadays theism professes to accept the evolution hypothesis. To accept it, but in what sense? Only I fear in the literal and original sense of merely unfolding what is there all along, not in the scientific sense of epigenesis or creative synthesis, described in an earlier

<sup>1</sup> *Les Principes de la Philosophie*, vol. III. § 45.

lecture. If so, all the difference there would be between creation without evolution and creation with it would be in the method not in the result; it would be such a difference as, to take a simple example, there is between starting with a binomial, say  $(a+b)^2$ , and starting with its expansion  $a^2+2ab+b^2$ . Creation in either case must be through and through determinate and complete, embracing both all that is and all that happens; only in one case its content would at first be explicit, in the other only implicit. Thus we have found Hegel saying: "The history of the world is the exhibition (*Darstellung*) how spirit comes to the consciousness of what in itself it means; and as the seed carries in itself the whole nature of the tree,...so too the first traces of spirit virtually contain the whole of history<sup>1</sup>." This is the literal evolution in which everything is predetermined if not foreordained, a drama of which the book of final judgment constitutes the play and the history of the world just its representation (*Darstellung*), as the astronomer-poet of Persia had said centuries before Hegel was born. Up to this point the reconciliation of pluralism and theism seemed possible, but here the disagreement threatens to be radical: an evolution that is essentially dialectical demands more than pluralism, resting on the *prima facie* evidence of experience, can accept; while evolution as epigenesis seems even more clearly to conflict with the ideas of theism generally current. We come in fact upon the old problem of 'fixed fate, free-will, fore-knowledge absolute': intractable as it has proved we must needs try to discuss this problem with open minds.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. above, Lect. v. p. 100.



